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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gather information from secondary school students, their teachers and parents concerning their perceptions of school and education. The study was a replication of similar studies carried out in North York in 1971-72 and 1976-77, and was intended to provide data regarding current perceptions of school as well as to assess the extent to which perceptions of each group had changed during the past 11 years. Students have a much more conservative view of education than they did in 1971-72. Over three-quarters of the students felt that formal exams are necessary and that there is sufficient freedom of academic choice. The number of students who feel hampered by pointless rules and regulations has decreased. The overwhelming majority of students expressed satisfaction with their schools, their teachers, the methods used for evaluation, and the education they are receiving. Parent responses also endorsed the education students are receiving. Parent support for formal exams and stricter discipline increased significantly from 1971-72 to 1982-83. The staff responses indicated a continuing faith in education and satisfaction with teaching. A comparison of student, parent, and staff responses indicated that in most areas there is a high level of consensus. (BW)

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NORTH YORK BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH REPORT

ED250338

SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS:

STUDENTS, PARENTS, STAFF

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January, 1984

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather information from secondary school students, their teachers and parents concerning their perceptions of school and education. The study was a replication of similar studies carried out in North York in 1971-72 and 1976-77 and was intended to provide data regarding current perceptions of school as well as to assess the extent to which perceptions of each group had changed during the past eleven years.

The Earlier Studies

1971-72 Study

During the 1971-72 school year, the Research Department conducted a survey for the Board on behalf of the Ad Hoc CommitteeRespecting Student Matters to determine the perceptions of secondary school students, their teachers and parents concerning school and education. Questionnaires were developed for each group of respondents to provide information on the following seven topics:

School and Education in General
Aspirations
Teaching
Student Rights and Responsibilities
Curriculum
Standards and Evaluation
Discipline and Attendance

Completed questionnaires were returned by students in 19 of the 20 secondary schools, 79% of the teachers and 42% of the parents. The results for each of the three groups were reported to each school individually and on a group basis to the Board. The highlights of the findings indicated that:

- A majority of respondents to the three surveys agreed that North York schools were providing students with a good education.

- When asked to respond to a statement concerning Standards and Evaluation, two-thirds of the teachers agreed that standards were dropping. Parent opinion was divided, with a small majority (55%) agreeing that North York schools were drifting away from previous high standards.

- Concerning Students' Rights and Responsibilities, a majority of students agreed with a series of statements about students needing more freedom and a greater voice in decision-making and disagreed with statements suggesting that they now have sufficient freedom. Parents and teachers, on the other hand, expressed a more conservative point of view and indicated that they felt students had sufficient freedom and responsibility for decisions affecting them.

- Students and teachers viewed statements concerning Discipline and Attendance differently. Over half the students (58%) agreed that they were hampered by pointless rules and regulations while only 8% of the teachers agreed that the students were so hampered. Two-thirds of the teachers disagreed with the statement that the schools are too permissive and 69% of the parents agreed that discipline should be stricter.

1976-77 Study

The study was repeated during the 1976-77 school year in order to determine the extent to which economic and social changes in the five years since 1972 had influenced perceptions about school and education. All secondary schools were invited to participate and eight schools decided to do so. The questionnaires for each of the three groups of participants included a set of core items from the earlier study (nine items from each of the student and staff questionnaires; six items from the parent questionnaire) plus items developed for each school to reflect their particular concerns. In comparison with the results from 1971-72, the findings indicated that in the eight schools involved:

- A majority of respondents from all three groups were still in agreement that North York schools provided students with a good education. There was a significant increase in the positive attitudes of students towards school since 1971-72.

- All three groups expressed more conservative attitudes towards the necessity of formal exams, with the most dramatic increase occurring in student responses (up 43% since 1971-72). There was also a significant change among staff and parents in regard to marks and grades with fewer respondents believing that there was too much emphasis on marks in our secondary schools.

- Students appeared to be more satisfied concerning their Rights and Responsibilities. Ninety-three percent of the students agreed that they have sufficient freedom to decide what they want to study, compared to 56% in 1971-72. Their views in 1976-77 were more consistent with those expressed by parents and teachers who also reported that students do not need more voice in decision-making.

- Significantly fewer students felt hampered by school rules and regulations than in the previous study (an 18% decrease). Only 6% of staff agreed that students are hampered.

- Conservative patterns of responses were evident in regard to Discipline. Almost half the teachers felt that schools are too permissive (a 16% increase over the 1971-72 study). Similarly, 75% of parents agreed that discipline in secondary schools should be stricter (up 10% from 1971-72); 72% of the students also agreed that schools need the power to discipline students, representing a 29% change in agreement since 1971-72.

The reaction of educators in North York to these surveys was very positive. They felt that the findings of these surveys fostered communication between different sectors of each school community, provided students and staff with an opportunity to express themselves about a variety of aspects of school life and led to an improved understanding of one another's point of view.

THE 1982-83 STUDY

Background

Eleven years after the first perceptions study was carried out, senior staff agreed that a similar survey should be undertaken. The preceding decade was one in which significant demographic changes had occurred in the schools, reflected in a marked decline in enrolment and a shift in the socio-economic, ethnic, and racial compositions of some school populations. It was anticipated that these demographic changes, in combination with a prolonged period of economic recession and constraints, and a more conservative social milieu, would influence the way in which schools and education are perceived. Accordingly, during the Fall of 1982, the principals of all secondary schools were invited to participate in the study and twelve chose to do so.

Methodology

Development of the Questionnaires

The core questions used in the two previous surveys again formed the basis of each of the questionnaires. During November and December, 1982, members of Educational Research & Evaluation Services also held several meetings with the principal and some staff members in each of the participating schools to discuss other areas of concern for inclusion in the survey, and to obtain their reactions to initial drafts of the survey instruments.

The format of the questionnaires for students, staff, and parents in each school were similar. The majority of items were statements which participants were asked to rate on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The first nine items on each of the student and staff questionnaires and the first six items on the parent questionnaire

were the core items from the earlier studies. The core items were:

Students

- Formal examinations are necessary to let students know where they stand.
- Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.
- Generally my teachers do a satisfactory job of teaching.
- This school is providing me with a good education.
- Schools need the power to discipline students.
- Students have sufficient freedom to decide what they want to study.
- My teachers are fair in evaluating student progress.
- This school does not give all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.
- I dislike this school.

Staff

- Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.
- Students should have more voice in determining curricula.
- There is too much emphasis on marks in this school.
- Formal examinations are necessary to maintain standards.
- This school is providing students with a good education.
- I like teaching in this school.
- Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.
- This school gives all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.

Parents

- All in all, our school is doing a good job of educating my child(ren).
- Discipline in our secondary schools should be stricter.
- Students need more freedom to decide what they want to study.
- Formal exams are necessary in our secondary schools.
- Students should have more voice in determining school rules and regulations.
- There is too much emphasis on marks in our secondary schools.

Several schools included an open-ended final question which gave participants an opportunity to express concerns about the school and/or suggest changes.

In two schools the parent questionnaires were translated into Italian and parents had the option of completing the questionnaire in either English or Italian. For Etienne Brûlé, the French language school, all three questionnaires were translated into French.

Sample Selection

Each school was asked to select a sample of approximately 120 Grade 12 students. In ten schools classes of advanced and general level students were chosen which were representative of the total Grade 12 population. In one of the remaining two schools all Grade 12 students were surveyed along with a few Grade 11 students and in the other school a few Grade 10 students were also included to provide the requested sample size.

In each school two hundred parent names and addresses were randomly selected from a computer printout of the names and addresses of all parents of Grade 12 students. At one school which did not have 200 Grade 12 students, questionnaires were sent to all parents. Another school asked that the sample size be 125 rather than 200 as they were planning to send out another questionnaire as well and did not want individual parents to receive two questionnaires.

All teaching and administrative staff in each of the twelve schools received a questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedures

Student questionnaires were administered by the schools during the three month period from early February to mid-April at times convenient for them.

In three schools the students were assembled in the cafeteria and the questionnaire was administered in one session. The remaining schools administered the questionnaires in individual classrooms. Each student received a questionnaire and a mark sense computer card. Instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and mark the computer card were attached to the questionnaire and also read aloud to the students. Students were asked to complete the questionnaire first and then transcribe their responses to the closed-ended questions on the computer card. Both the completed questionnaires and the computer cards were collected and returned to Research & Evaluation Services for tabulation and analysis.

Following completion of the student questionnaires, principals in each school distributed a copy of the questionnaire to each staff member with a memo explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting their co-operation. Staff were asked to return their completed questionnaires to Research & Evaluation Services by courier. Staff responses were transcribed on computer cards by Research staff.

Parent questionnaires for each school were mailed at the same time that student and staff questionnaires were being completed. A letter from the principal explaining the purpose of the survey was attached to the questionnaire. A self addressed envelope was enclosed and parents were asked to return their questionnaires within two weeks. Parent responses were also transcribed on computer cards by Research staff.

The closed-ended items were analyzed by Computer to obtain the number and percent of respondents who selected each response alternative. The responses to open-ended questions were coded and analyzed by Research staff.

Individual reports were prepared for each school summarizing the responses of students, staff and parents to all questions. This report presents a summary of the results for all participating schools for the core items only and is organized in the following sections:

- Response Rates
- 1982-83 Results for each Core Item and Comparison with 1971-72 and 1976-77 Results for Students, Parents and Staff
- A Comparison of Students', Parents' and Staff's 1982-83 Perceptions on Topics of Common Concern

Each of these sections is colour coded for easy reference.

RESULTS

Response Rates

Completed questionnaires were returned by 1447 students in the 12 schools. Table 1 indicates the number of students sampled in each school.

TABLE 1

STUDENT SAMPLE SIZE BY SCHOOL

1982-83

School*	Number of Students Sampled
A	118
B	105
C	120
D	120
E	128
F	120
G	97
H	125
I	120
J	126
K	120
L	148
TOTAL	1447

* In order to maintain anonymity, each school was given a letter code at random. All individual school results are reported by means of this letter code throughout the report.

Questionnaires were returned by 31% of the parents sampled. The return rates for individual schools ranged from a low of 22% to nearly half the parents approached at another school. The parent response rates are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

PARENT RESPONSE RATES BY SCHOOL

1982-83

School	Number of Parents Sampled	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Percentage Response
A	200	75	38
B	200	66	33
C	200	44	22
D	200	49	25
E	200	52	26
F	200	68	34
G	125	60	48
H	200	56	28
I	200	55	28
J	156	39	25
K	200	69	35
L	200	77	39
TOTAL	2281	710	31

Questionnaires were returned by 69% of the staff members in the twelve schools. Individual school response rates are listed in the table below and range from 50% to a high of 87%.

TABLE 3

STAFF RESPONSE RATES

1982-83

School	Percentage Response
A	87
B	59
C	84
D	84
E	64
F	58
G	54
H	73
I	50
J	82
K	69
L	64
TOTAL	69

1982-83 Results for each Core Item and Comparison with 1971-72 and 1976-77

The results for students, parents and staff for each of their core items are contained in this section. The data are organized in the same way for each group and are reported as follows:

1. A brief introduction and analysis of the patterns of change in perceptions regarding the core items over the years.

2. A table of the core items indicating:

   a) percent agreement in each of the survey years,

   b) the change in percent of agreement between surveys,

   c) the range of percent agreement among individual schools for each survey year.

3. A table for each core item showing the percentage of respondents who selected each of the response alternatives in each year (i.e. 1971-72, 1976-77 and 1982-83).

Bar graphs providing a visual representation of the percent agreement for all schools may be found in the Appendix.

Students' Responses to Core Items

The following table indicates that significant changes have occurred since the first survey was undertaken eleven years ago. Foremost amongst these changes is an increasing trend towards conservatism, characterized by a shift toward beliefs that formal exams are necessary and that there is sufficient freedom of academic choice. Consistent with this trend is the dwindling number of students who feel hampered by pointless rules and regulations. This conservative swing is complemented by a more positive outlook among students towards their teachers and schools. Students also expressed greater appreciation for their schools, the education they are receiving, their teachers, and for methods of evaluation used.

Core Items	Percent Agreement (total sample)			Change in Agreement		Range (individual schools)		
	1971-2	1976-7	1982-3	1971-2 to 1976-7	1976-7 to 1982-3	1971-2	1976-7	1982-3
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Formal exams are necessary to let students know where they stand.	21	59	73	+38*	+14*	12/62	45/79	48/89
Students have sufficient freedom to decide what they want to study.	55	88	87	+33*	-1	42/74	85/93	76/93
Schools need the power to discipline students.	39	57	51	+18*	-6*	28/54	32/75	39/61
Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.	53	31	40	-22*	+9*	24/75	18/54	18/54
My teachers are fair in evaluating student progress.	52	59	72	+7*	+13*	33/75	40/76	57/81
This school is providing me with a good education.	64	67	81	+3	+14*	53/75	55/78	55/91
This school does not give all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.	36	25	27	-11*	+2	24/51	15/53	16/44
Generally my teachers do a satisfactory job of teaching.	76	82	84	+6*	+2	53/86	70/88	67/94
I dislike this school.	24	17	16	-7*	-1	4/51	12/28	8/30

* Significant at the .05 level.

1. Formal exams are necessary to let students know where they stand.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	4	11	17
Agree	17	48	56
No Opinion	2	7	3
Disagree	40	26	18
Strongly Disagree	37	7	6
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	21	59	73
Range (individual schools)	12/62	45/79	48/89

The trend towards considerably increased agreement revealed in the 1976-77 survey continued through the 1982-83 study with three-quarters of the students polled believing that formal exams are necessary. The reader will note, however, that in 1982-83, despite there being majority agreement in nearly every school, there is a considerable spread among the schools. An examination of Figure 1 in the Appendix will exemplify this point.

2. Students have sufficient freedom to decide what they want to study.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	10	28	29
Agree	45	60	58
No Opinion	2	4	1
Disagree	30	5	9
Strongly Disagree	12	2	3
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	55	88	87
Range (individual schools)	42/74	85/93	76/93

Although there was a significant change between 1971-72 and 1976-77, there has been little change in student perceptions with regard to this item since then. Eighty-seven percent of the students agree that they have sufficient freedom to decide what they want to study.

3. Schools need the power to discipline students.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	7	19	13
Agree	32	38	38
No Opinion	9	21	9
Disagree	34	15	29
Strongly Disagree	17	6	11
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	39	57	51
Range (individual schools)	28/54	32/75	39/61

There has been considerable fluctuation in opinion during the past eleven years over the issue of schools disciplining students. Half of the students in 1982-83 agree that schools need the power to discipline students compared with 39% in 1971-72 and 57% in 1976-77.

4. Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	26	11	14
Agree	27	20	26
No Opinion	4	15	8
Disagree	34	43	42
Strongly Disagree	8	10	10
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	53	31	40
Range (individual schools)	24/75	18/54	18/54

There was a considerable decrease from 1971-72 to 1976-77 in the percent of students who feel hampered by many rules and regulations. The 1982-83 results, however, show a slight increase with 40% of students now feeling restricted by rules, although, as is obvious from the range, there is considerable variation among the schools.

5. My teachers are fair in evaluating student progress.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	4	7	8
Agree	48	52	64
No Opinion	12	19	7
Disagree	27	17	17
Strongly Disagree	9	3	4
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	52	59	72
Range (individual schools)	33/75	40/76	57/81

There was little change between 1971-72 and 1976-77 in the percent of students who agreed that their teachers were fair in evaluating student progress. In 1982-83, however, there was a significant increase with 72% of students in agreement. Further, there is now less discrepancy among individual schools in this regard than was the case five years ago.

6. This school is providing me with a good education.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	10	12	16
Agree	54	55	65
No Opinion	12	17	6
Disagree	18	12	10
Strongly Disagree	6	4	3
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	64	67	81
Range (individual schools)	53/75	55/78	55/91

Eighty percent of the students included in the survey in 1982-83 indicated that their school provides them with a good education. These results are in sharp contrast to the two earlier surveys when approximately two-thirds of the students said that they believed this.

7. This school does not give all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	10	7	7
Agree	26	18	20
No Opinion	8	18	8
Disagree	40	41	46
Strongly Disagree	15	15	18
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	36	25	27
Range (individual schools)	24/51	15/53	16/44

Almost two-thirds of the students surveyed in 1982-83 disagreed with the statement that their school does not give all students an equal chance to obtain the best education. While more students now disagree with this statement than in the earlier surveys, the change from 1976-77 seems largely attributable to the fact that fewer students expressed "no opinion".

8. Generally my teachers do a satisfactory job of teaching.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	7	15	12
Agree	69	67	72
No Opinion	5	6	2
Disagree	15	8	11
Strongly Disagree	5	2	3
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	76	82	84
Range (individual schools)	53/86	70/88	67/94

The percent of students who agree that their teachers do a satisfactory job of teaching has increased since the survey was first conducted eleven years ago. The widening range, however, suggests that though on a system basis over 80% of the students are satisfied with their teachers, there is considerable variation among individual schools with respect to this item (see Figure 8, Appendix).

9. I dislike this school.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	9	6	7
Agree	15	11	9
No Opinion	10	18	11
Disagree	40	46	46
Strongly Disagree	26	18	27
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	24	17	16
Range (individual schools)	4/51	12/28	8/30

In 1982-83, 73% of the students disagreed with the statement "I dislike this school", in comparison to 64% and 66% respectively in the two earlier surveys. These results are consistent with the results for earlier items indicating that, in general, students view their school more positively than they did in the previous surveys.

Parents' Responses to Core Items

The most dramatic changes in the pattern of parent response occurred between the 1971-72 and 1976-77 surveys. There were substantial increases in the percentage of parents who supported formal exams and stricter discipline and a decrease in the percentage who felt there was too much emphasis on marks. The 1982-83 pattern is similar to that of 1976-77 in that parents continued their strong support for the necessity of formal exams and stricter discipline; few parents feel that there is too much emphasis on marks, that students need more freedom to decide what they want to study, or that students should have more voice in determining the school's rules and regulations. The parents also gave a stronger endorsement to the statement that the school is doing a good job of educating their children.

Core Items	Percent Agreement (total sample)			Change in Agreement		Range (individual schools)		
	1971-2	1976-7	1982-3	1971-2 to 1976-7	1976-7 to 1982-3	1971-2	1976-7	1982-3
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Formal exams are necessary in our secondary schools.	61	84	88	+23*	+4	42/72	75/95	75/94
Discipline in our secondary schools should be stricter.	65	75	72	+10*	-3	44/76	67/78	55/84
There is too much emphasis on marks and grades in our secondary schools.	33	21	24	-12*	+3	19/58	12/[illegible]	16/50
Students need more freedom to decide what they want to study.	29	20	21	-9*	+1	13/48	12/49	8/49
All in all, our school is doing a good job of educating my child(ren).	74	65	79	-9*	+14*	61/86	55/75	73/84
Students should have more voice in determining school rules and regulations.	28	27	29	-1	+2	16/47	17/45	19/44

* Significant at the .05 level.

1. Formal exams are necessary in our secondary schools.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	18	40	41
Agree	43	44	47
No Opinion	3	3	3
Disagree	25	7	8
Strongly Disagree	10	3	2
No Response	-	2	-
Total % Agreement	61	84	88
Range (individual schools)	42/72	75/95	75/94

As was the case five years ago, the majority of parents today agree that formal exams are necessary. At least three-quarters of the parents in each school agree with this statement (see Figure 10, Appendix).

2. Discipline in our secondary schools should be stricter.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	31	38	31
Agree	34	37	41
No Opinion	5	11	8
Disagree	25	14	18
Strongly Disagree	5	1	2
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	65	75	72
Range (individual schools)	44/76	67/78	55/84

As in the earlier surveys, in 1982-83 the majority of parents agree that discipline should be stricter in our secondary schools. The second survey reflected a 10% increase in support for this statement. Here too, there is considerable variation among schools in the percent of parents agreeing, with a low of 55% and a high of 84%.

3. There is too much emphasis on marks and grades in our secondary schools.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	10	7	5
Agree	23	14	19
No Opinion	5	12	5
Disagree	50	54	57
Strongly Disagree	13	11	13
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	33	21	24
Range (individual schools)	19/58	12/29	15/50

Over the eleven year period covered by these three surveys, there has been a small but steady increase in the percent of parents who think there is not too much emphasis on marks and grades in our secondary schools - 63% in 1971-72, 65% in 1976-77 and 70% in 1982-83.

4. Students need more freedom to decide what they want to study.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	8	8	6
Agree	21	12	15
No Opinion	4	7	4
Disagree	47	55	55
Strongly Disagree	19	17	20
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	29	20	21
Range (individual schools)	13/48	12/49	8/49

Approximately three-quarters of the parents in both 1976-77 and 1982-83 indicated that students do not need more freedom to decide what they want to study. The reader will note, however, that there is a considerable range of opinion between parents in individual schools with respect to this item, i.e. from 8% to 49%.

5. All in all, our school is doing a good job of educating my child(ren).

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	9	11	15
Agree	65	54	64
No Opinion	5	8	3
Disagree	18	20	14
Strongly Disagree	3	5	3
No Response	-	2	1
Total % Agreement	74	65	79
Range (individual schools)	61/80	55/75	73/84

In 1982-83 more than three-quarters of the parents who responded indicated that their school is doing a good job of educating their child. This reflects a return to more positive feelings about the education their child is receiving than was the case in 1976-77. It should also be noted that in 1982-83 there is little variation between schools in terms of the percent of parents agreeing with this item.

6. Students should have more voice in determining school rules and regulations.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	6	7	5
Agree	22	20	24
No Opinion	3	10	7
Disagree	42	45	49
Strongly Disagree	28	16	[illegible]
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	28	27	29
Range (individual schools)	16/47	17/45	19/44

Parent opinion concerning students' right to more voice in the determination of school rules and regulations has remained relatively stable over the past eleven years. Each year, between 60% and 70% of parents have felt that students should <u>not</u> have a larger role in determining school rules.

Staff's Responses to Core Items

A swing towards a more traditional approach, a continuing faith in education and satisfaction with teaching highlight eleven years of staff opinion. Staff willingness to accommodate the shift in education towards a more conservative approach is indicated by (i) increasing support for formal exams, (ii) a growing sense that schools are too permissive and (iii) a decrease in belief that there is too much emphasis on marks and that students are hampered by pointless rules and regulations. Staff believe that a good education has continued to be provided to all students. Finally, staff were almost unanimous in their agreement that they like teaching in their present school and that they get a great deal of personal satisfaction from teaching.

Core Items	Percent Agreement (total sample)			Change in Agreement		Range (individual schools)		
	1971-2	1976-7	1982-3	1971-2 to 1976-7	1976-7 to 1982-3	1971-2	1976-7	1982-3
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Formal exams are necessary to maintain standards.	57	75	77	+18*	+2	30/80	56/89	65/96
This school is too permissive.	29	43	43	+14*	-	6/58	28/69	18/72
There is too much emphasis on marks in this school.	32	17	21	-15*	+4	8/72	2/34	7/59
Students should have more voice in determining curricula.	24	14	23	-10*	+9*	8/34	10/29	9/40
This school gives all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.	73	67	72	-6*	+5*	64/83	49/76	56/79
Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	92	88	95	-4	+7*	83/100	79/92	92/100
Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.	8	6	5	-2	-1	1/16	0/21	0/9
This school is providing students with a good education.	81	80	89	-1	+9*	71/90	67/95	78/98
I like teaching in this school.	91	90	94	-1	+4	82/97	77/100	87/100

* Significant at the .05 level.

1. Formal exams are necessary to maintain standards.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	19	36	27
Agree	38	39	50
No Opinion	6	3	2
Disagree	28	16	16
Strongly Disagree	9	4	4
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	57	75	77
Range (individual schools)	30/80	56/89	65/96

Approximately three-quarters of the staff in both 1976-77 and 1982-83 agreed that formal exams are necessary to maintain standards. This represents a substantial increase from eleven years ago when only 57% of staff supported this statement. Although there is still considerable variation among individual schools with respect to the necessity for formal exams, the limits of the range have changed substantially since 1971-72 (i.e. 30/71 versus 64/94).

2. This school is too permissive.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	6	10	11
Agree	23	33	32
No Opinion	6	8	3
Disagree	54	42	44
Strongly Disagree	11	5	8
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	29	43	43
Range (individual schools)	6/58	28/69	18/72

In 1971-72, 29% of staff felt that their schools were too permissive, whereas in the succeeding surveys 43% of staff agreed that this was the case. In 1982-83, however, slightly more staff than in 1976-77 disagreed with this item. The differences between individual schools is quite substantial as indicated by the range (see Figure 17, Appendix).

3. There is too much emphasis on marks in this school.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	9	3	5
Agree	23	14	16
No Opinion	7	11	3
Disagree	53	61	64
Strongly Disagree	9	10	12
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	32	17	21
Range (individual schools)	8/72	2/34	7/59

In 1982-83, only one teacher in five agreed that there is too much emphasis on marks in their school. Conversely, three-quarters of their peers felt that there is not too much emphasis on marks. The reader will note that there has been a gradual increase since 1971-72 in the percent of teachers who disagree with this item.

4. Students should have more voice in determining curricula.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	4	2	2
Agree	20	12	21
No Opinion	6	10	3
Disagree	49	58	57
Strongly Disagree	20	17	16
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	24	14	23
Range (individual schools)	8/34	10/29	9/40

Approximately three-quarters of the staff in both 1982-83 and 1976-77 did not feel that students should have more voice in determining curricula. There was an increase, however, from 1976-77 to 1982-83 in the percent of teachers who did feel that students should have more say in determining curricula.

5. This school gives all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	19	15	16
Agree	54	52	56
No Opinion	8	10	5
Disagree	15	19	19
Strongly Disagree	3	4	3
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	73	67	72
Range (individual schools)	64/83	49/76	56/79

Staff opinion on whether or not all students are being given an equal chance to obtain the best education is characterized by its stability since neither agreement nor range figures underwent dramatic transformations during the eleven years since the first survey. A substantial majority of staff continue to believe that there is equality of opportunity for all students to obtain a good education.

6. Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	51	45	53
Agree	41	43	42
No Opinion	3	3	1
Disagree	4	6	4
Strongly Disagree	1	1	1
No Response	-	2	1
Total % Agreement	92	88	95
Range (individual schools)	83/100	79/92	92/100

Staff overwhelmingly agree that teaching gives them a great deal of personal satisfaction and this sentiment has remained constant during the past decade. There is little variation between schools in this regard.

7. Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	1	2	1
Agree	7	4	4
No Opinion	4	5	1
Disagree	61	52	55
Strongly Disagree	27	36	40
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	8	6	5
Range (individual schools)	1/16	0/21	0/9

As is evident in the above table, staff agreed to disagree that students are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations. The narrow range further indicates a high degree of consensus among schools on this issue.

8. This school is providing students with a good education.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	15	14	25
Agree	66	66	64
No Opinion	9	8	3
Disagree	8	10	7
Strongly Disagree	2	1	1
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	81	80	89
Range (individual schools)	71/90	67/95	78/98

In 1982-83, more staff than in the two previous surveys agreed that their school provides students with a good education. The strength of this statement is emphasized in that 25% of staff strongly agreed that this was so. The individual school responses also indicated strong support for this statement.

9. I like teaching in this school.

Responses	1971-72 %	1976-77 %	1982-83 %
Strongly Agree	40	40	47
Agree	51	50	47
No Opinion	4	4	2
Disagree	4	4	3
Strongly Disagree	1	1	1
No Response	-	1	1
Total % Agreement	91	90	94
Range (individual schools)	82/97	77/100	87/100

Teachers continue to like the schools in which they work. Ninety-four percent of the teachers who responded to the 1982-83 survey indicated that they like teaching in their present school. There is little variation among staff in individual schools in this regard.

A Comparison of Students', Parents', and Staff's 1982-83 Perceptions on Topics of Common Concern

A comparison of students', parents', and staff's responses to similar questions provides a measure of how closely these three groups agree on topics of common concern. The core items that were similar for more than one group were organized in tables. The following tables provide these comparisons.

A Comparison of Responses about Formal Exams

Item		Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
STUDENTS:	Formal exams are necessary to let students know where they stand.	17	56	3	18	6
PARENTS:	Formal exams are necessary in our secondary schools.	41	47	3	8	2
STAFF:	Formal exams are necessary to maintain standards.	27	50	2	16	4

While over three-quarters of each group agreed that formal exams are necessary, parents expressed the strongest feelings with 88% agreeing with this item.

A Comparison of Responses about Rules and Regulations

Item		Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
STUDENTS:	Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.	14	26	8	42	10
PARENTS:	Students should have more voice in determining school rules and regulations.	5	24	7	49	14
STAFF:	Students in this school are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations.	1	4	1	55	40

Students and staff expressed quite different views about school rules and regulations. Whereas 40% of the students feel that they are hampered by too many rules and regulations, only 5% of staff think this is true. Parents, too, appear not to be overly concerned with only 29% giving support to more student involvement in determining school rules and regulations.

A Comparison of Responses about Good Education

	Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
STUDENTS:	This school is providing me with a good education.	16	65	6	10	3
PARENTS:	All in all, our school is doing a good job of educating my child(ren).	15	64	3	14	3
STAFF:	This school is providing students with a good education.	25	64	3	7	1

A substantial majority of all three groups expressed agreement that the school is providing a good education. There was a slightly larger percentage of parents who disagreed with this statement.

A Comparison of Responses about Students Deciding What They Want to Study

	Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
STUDENTS:	Students have sufficient freedom to decide what they want to study.	29	58	1	9	3
PARENTS:	Students need more freedom to decide what they want to study.	6	15	4	55	20
STAFF:	Students should have more voice in determining curricula.	2	21	3	57	16

All three groups believe students have sufficient freedom to determine what they want to study. An 87% student agreement rate to this effect was complemented by parent and staff disagreement rates of 75% and 73% respectively, that students should play a greater role in determining curricula.

A Comparison of Responses about Marks

Item		Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
PARENTS:	There is too much emphasis on marks and grades in our secondary schools.	5	19	5	57	13
STAFF:	There is too much emphasis on marks in this school.	5	16	3	64	12

A majority of both parents and staff do not agree that there is too much emphasis on marks in schools. Only one in five parents and staff feel that marks are over-emphasized.

A Comparison of Responses about Discipline

Item		Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
PARENTS:	Discipline in our secondary schools should be stricter.	31	41	8	18	2
STAFF:	This school is too permissive.	11	32	3	44	8

Differing opinions characterized the response on the need for discipline in schools. While 72% of parents agreed that discipline should be stricter, only 43% of staff allowed that their schools were too permissive.

A Comparison of Responses about Equal Opportunities

Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
STUDENTS: This school does not give all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.	7	20	8	46	18
STAFF: This school gives all students an equal chance to obtain the best education.	16	56	5	19	3

A majority of both students and staff agreed that equal opportunity is given to all students to obtain the best education. Seventy-two percent of staff voiced this opinion and in disagreeing that equal opportunity is not provided, 64% of students echoed staff belief.

A Comparison of Responses about Liking or Disliking Their School

Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	No Opinion %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
STUDENTS: I dislike this school.	7	9	11	46	27
STAFF: I like teaching in this school.	47	47	2	3	1

While both students and staff expressed a liking for their school, the staff were more emphatic in their approval, recording a 94% agreement rate, as compared with 83% of students who disagreed with the statement "I dislike this school".

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to gather information from secondary school students, parents and teachers about their perceptions of school and education. A replication of similar studies carried out in North York in 1971-72 and 1976-77, it was designed to provide data concerning current perceptions of school as well as to assess the extent to which the perceptions of each group had changed over the past eleven years. The results obtained from the 1982-83 survey were compared to those obtained in 1971-72 and 1976-77 and an additional comparison was made between student, parent and staff 1982-83 perceptions on topics of common concern.

The 1982-83 student responses indicated that students today have a much more conservative view of education than they did in 1971-72. Over three-quarters of the respondents felt that formal exams are necessary and that there is sufficient freedom of academic choice. The number of students who feel hampered by pointless rules and regulations has decreased since 1971-72 as has disagreement over the statement "Schools need the power to discipline students". The conservative approach to education is complemented by a more positive outlook towards teachers and schools as indicated by the overwhelming majority of students who expressed satisfaction with their schools, their teachers, the methods used for evaluation and the education they are receiving.

Parent responses also endorsed the education students are receiving. Over 80% felt that their schools were doing a good job. Support for formal exams and stricter discipline increased significantly from 1971-72 to 1982-83 and fewer parents now believe that there is too much emphasis on marks, that students need more freedom to decide what they want to study or that students should have more voice in determining the school's rules and regulations.

The 1982-83 staff responses indicate a continuing faith in education and satisfaction with teaching. They were almost unanimous in expressing personal satisfaction with teaching and a liking for their present schools and most feel that a good education is being provided for all students. Agreement with the statements "Students should have more voice in determining curricula", "There is too much emphasis on marks" and "Students are hampered by many pointless rules and regulations" has remained consistently low over the 1971-72 to 1982-83 period. In accordance with this conservative stance, teachers also indicated an increasing belief that formal exams are necessary. Less than half of the teachers surveyed felt that their schools were too permissive, although there has been a significant increase in this belief since 1971-72.

A comparison of student, parent and staff responses indicates that in most areas there is a high level of consensus. Over three-quarters of each group agreed that formal exams are necessary and all three groups expressed agreement that the school is providing a good education and that students have sufficient freedom to determine what they want to study. A majority of both parents and staff disagreed that there is too much emphasis on marks. Most students and staff expressed a liking for their schools and a majority

from both groups agreed that equal opportunity is given to all students to obtain the best education. Some differences in opinion surfaced in the areas of rules and regulations and discipline. Approximately half of the students did not feel that they are hampered by too many rules and regulations as compared to the 95% of staff who held this view. Seventy-two percent of parents felt that discipline should be stricter, while only 43% of staff considered their schools too permissive.

APPENDIX

The following bar graphs present the percentage agreement by school for each core item in 1971-72, 1976-77 and 1982-83. Figures 1 to 9 indicate the students' percentage agreement, figures 10 to 15 the parents', and figures 16 to 24 the staff's agreement.

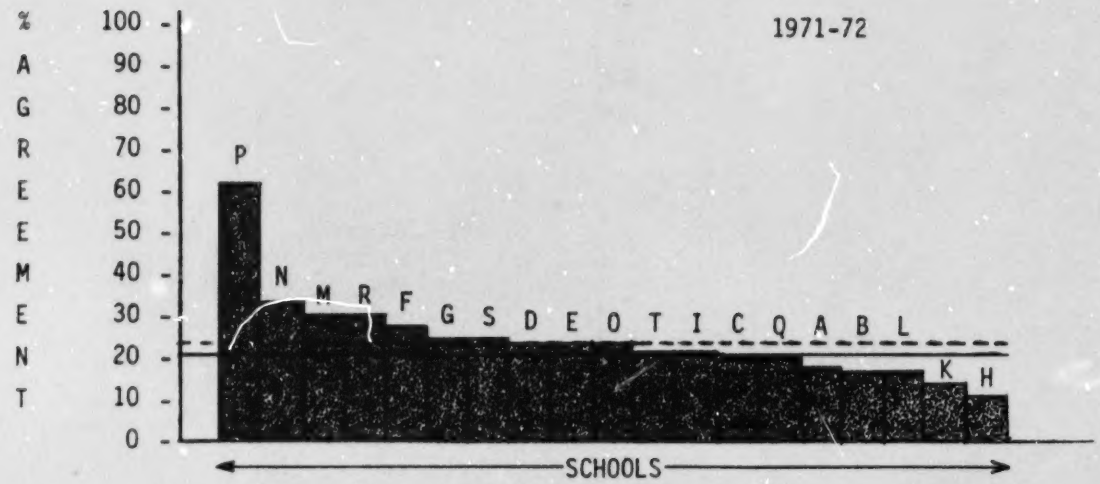
The solid horizontal line on each graph represents the average percent agreement of all participating schools in each survey. On the student graphs the broken line represents the average percent agreement of all students surveyed (Grades 11, 12 and 13) in 1971-72. The solid line indicates the average of only the Grade 12 students in each survey.

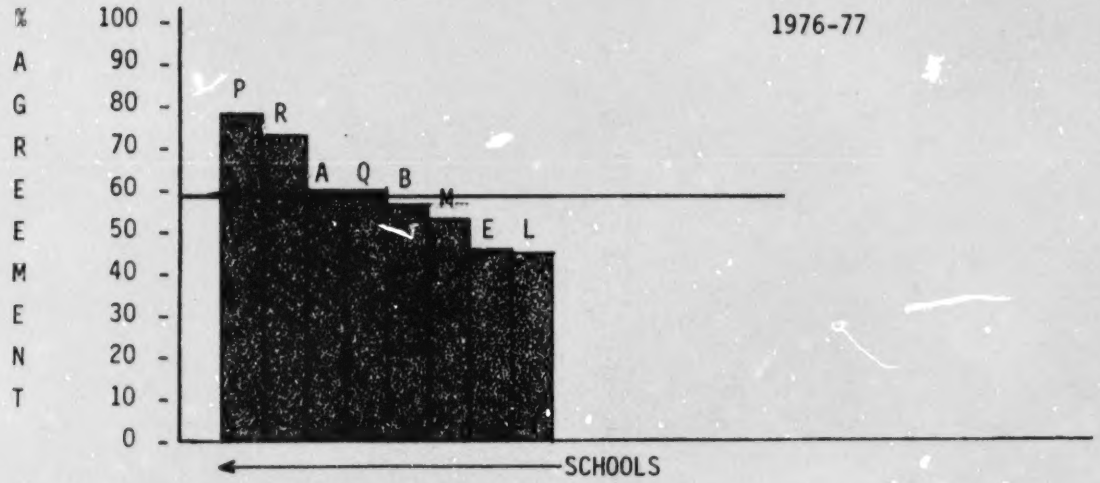
The bars on the 1971-72 student graphs represent all students surveyed and only Grade 12 students in 1976-77 and 1982-83.

Schools are identified by the same letter code on all graphs.

FIGURE 1

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT FORMAL EXAMS





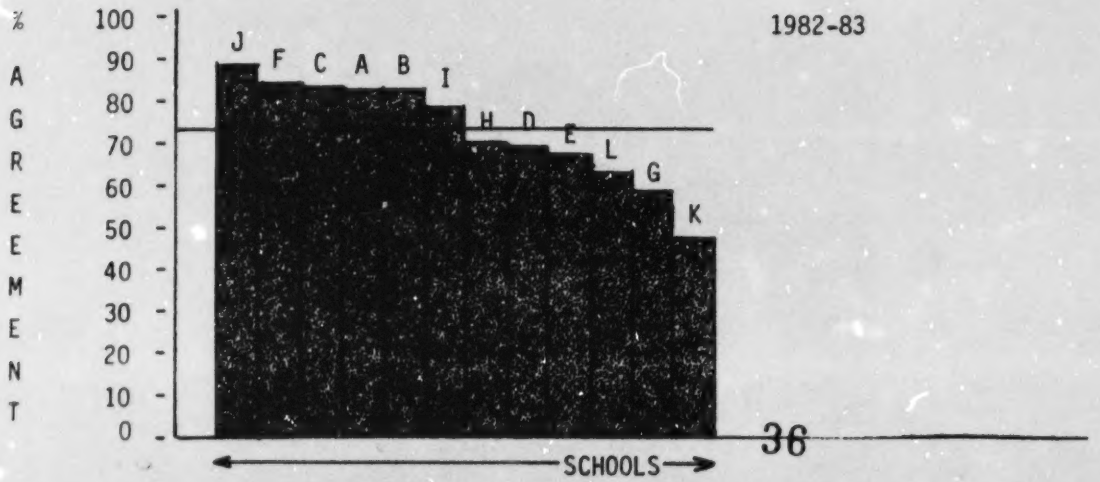
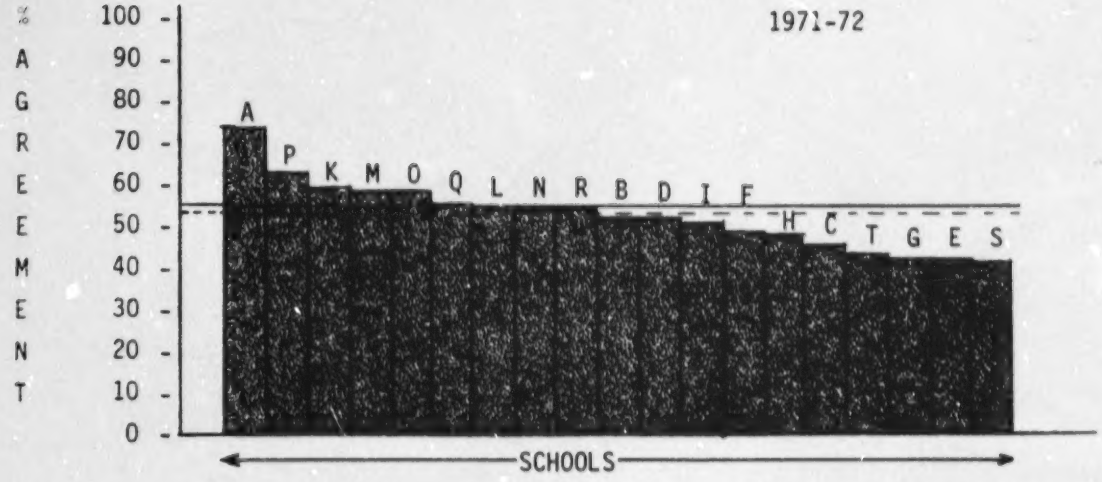
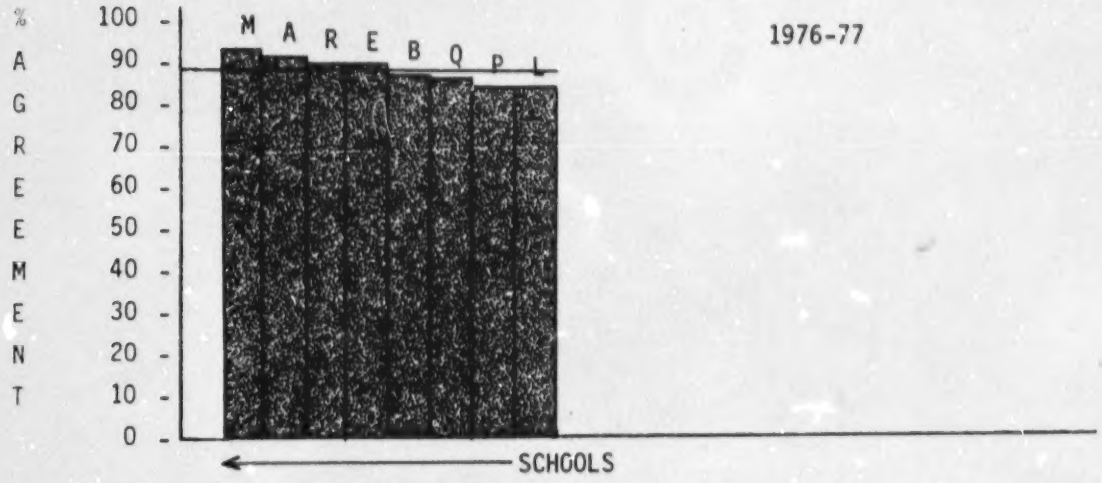


FIGURE 2

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT
STUDENTS DECIDING WHAT THEY WANT TO STUDY





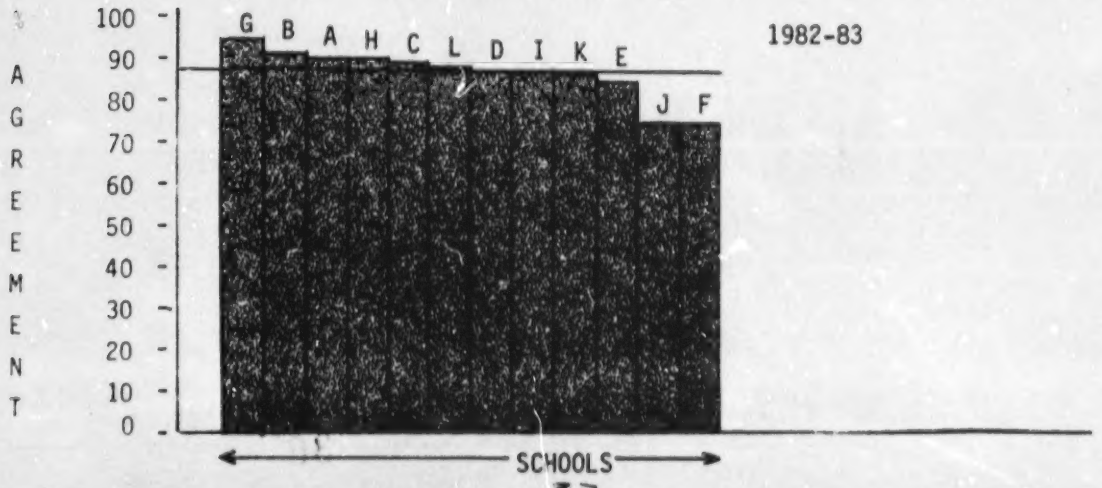
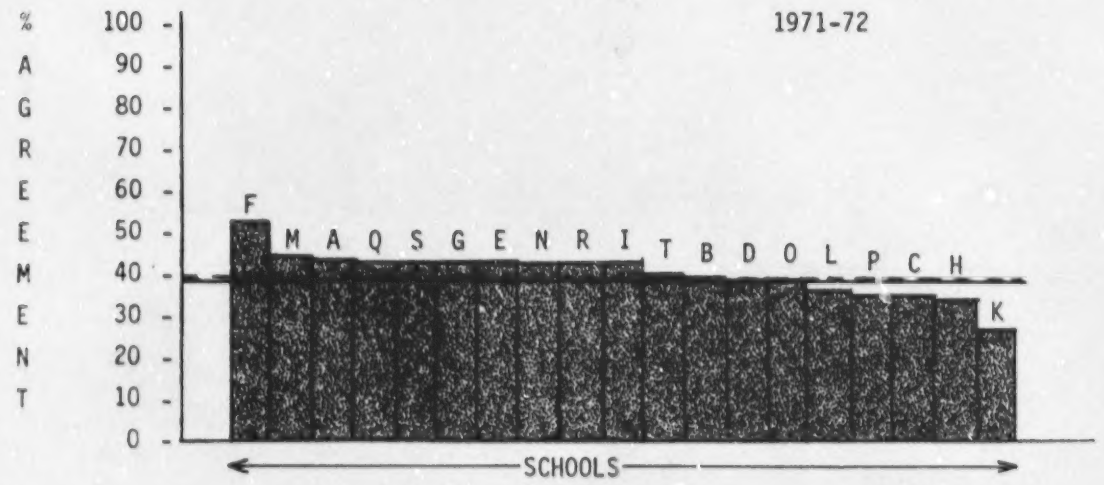
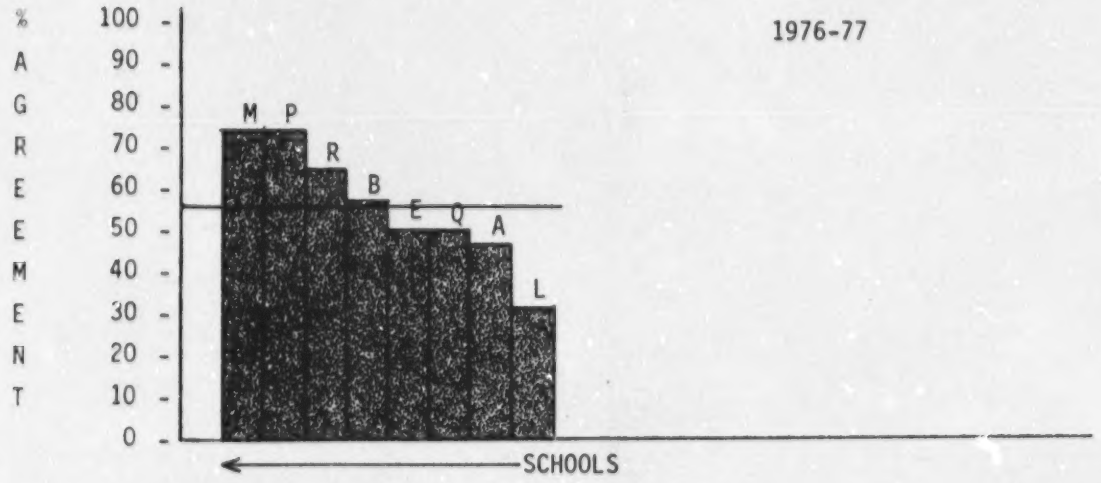


FIGURE 3

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT DISCIPLINE





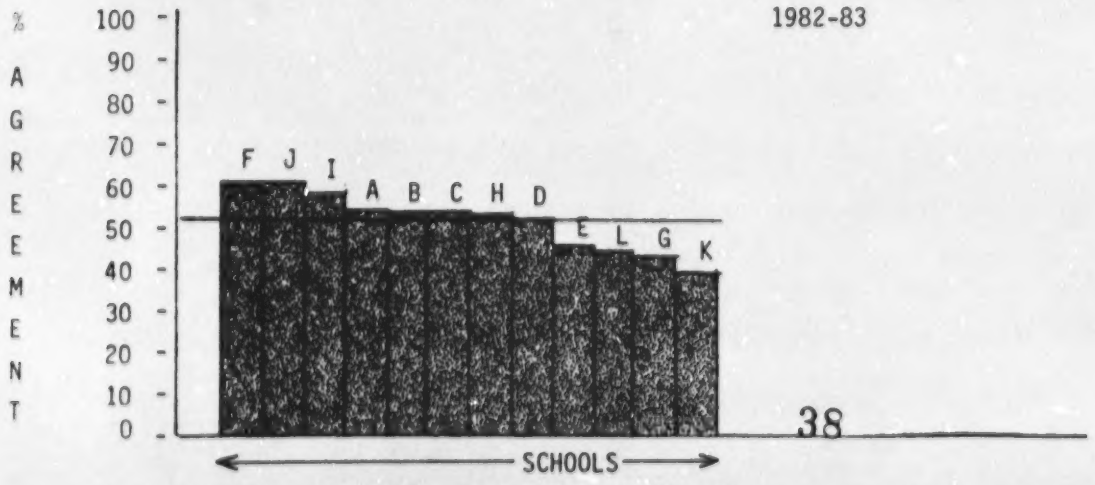
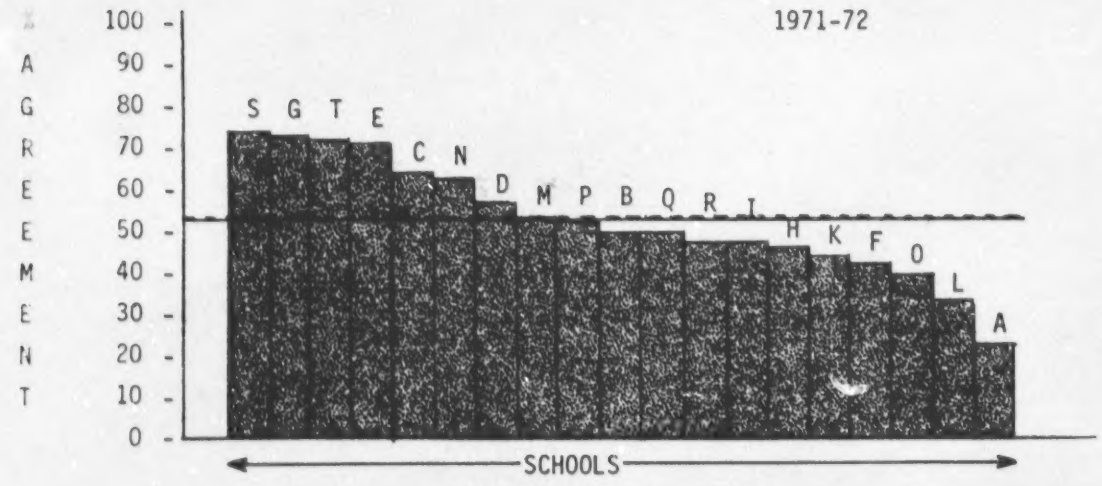
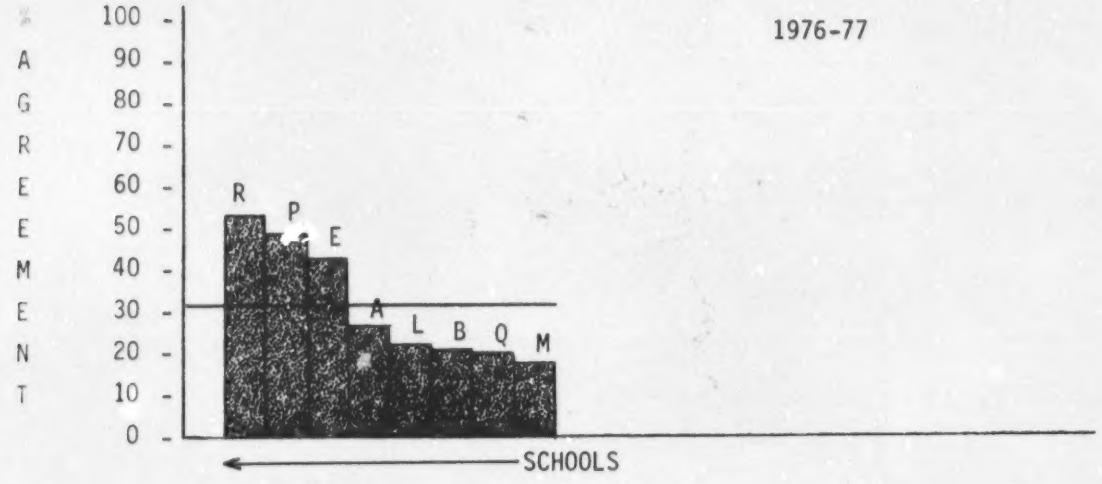


FIGURE 4

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT
RULES AND REGULATIONS





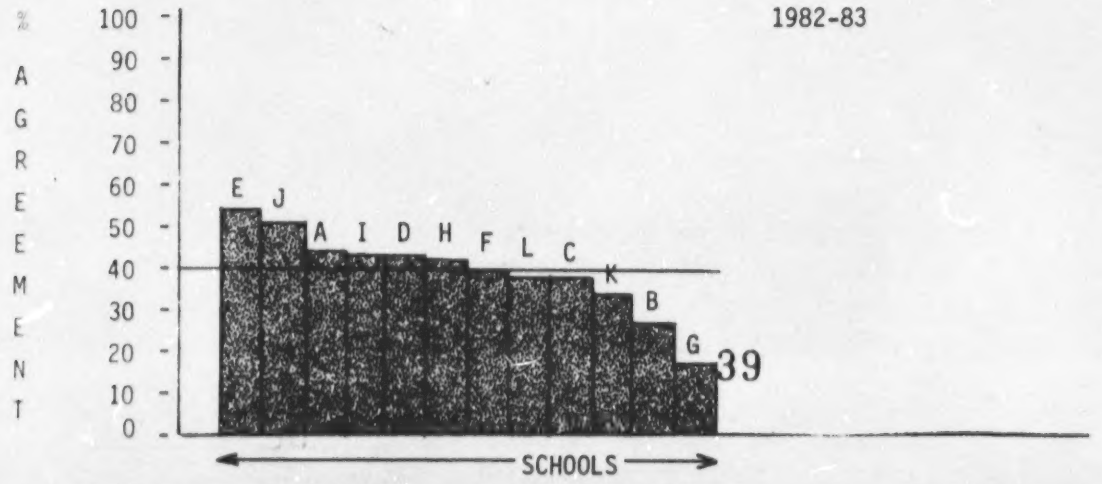
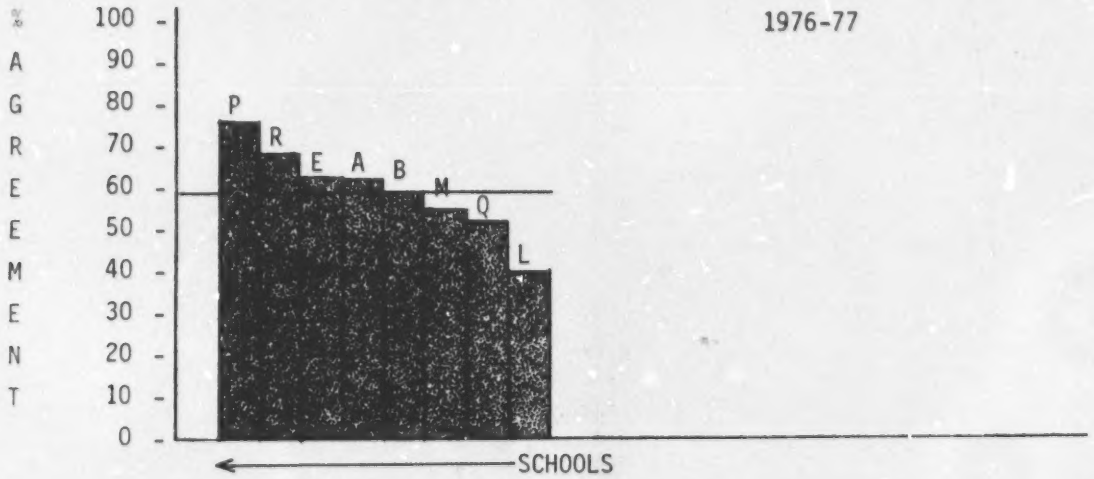


FIGURE 5

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT EVALUATION



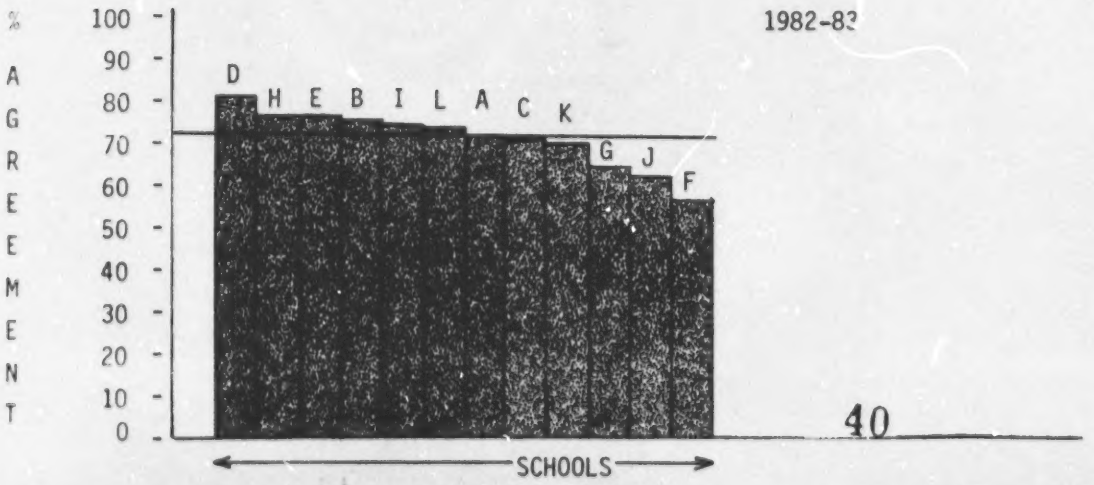


FIGURE 6

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT GOOD EDUCATION

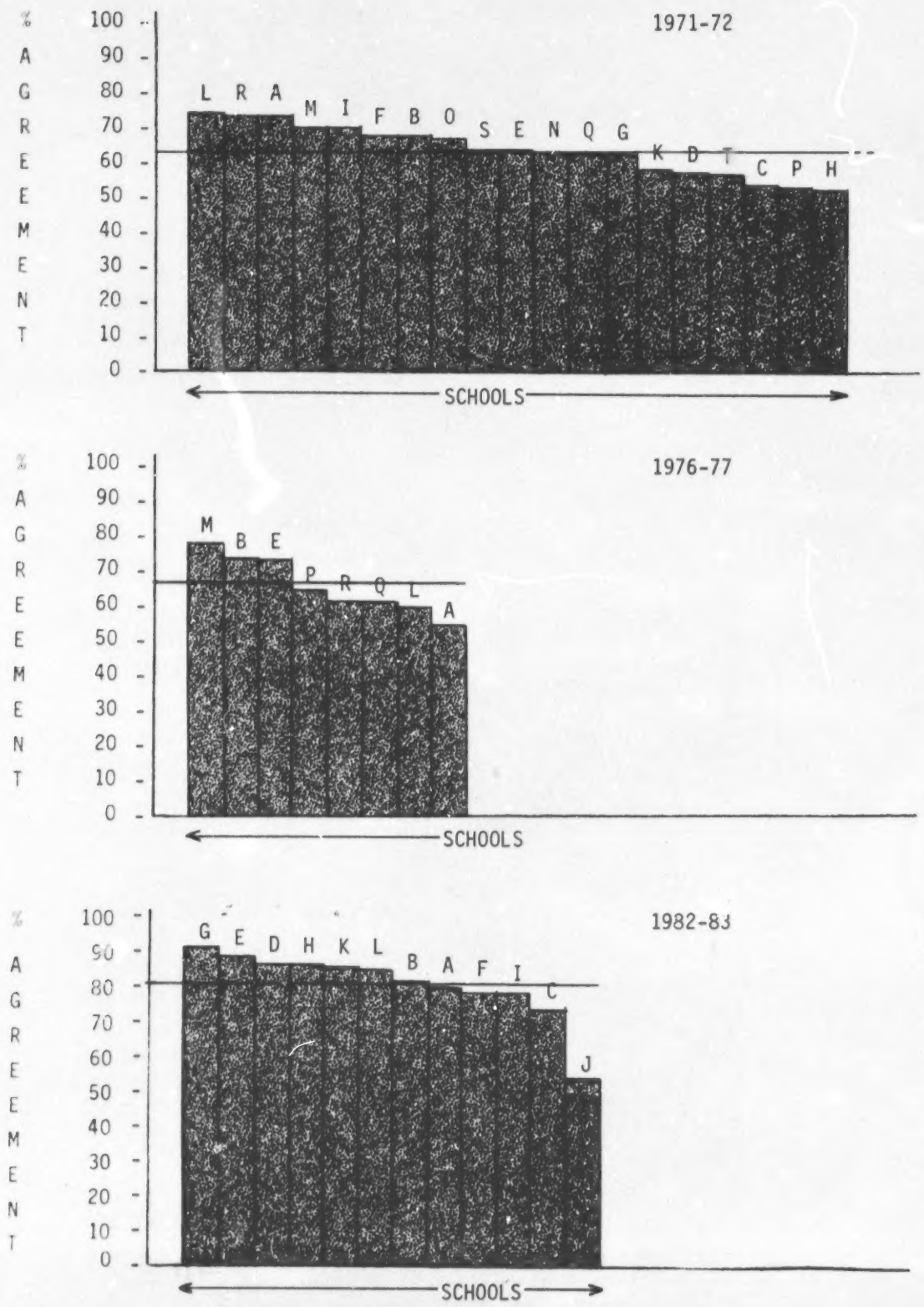
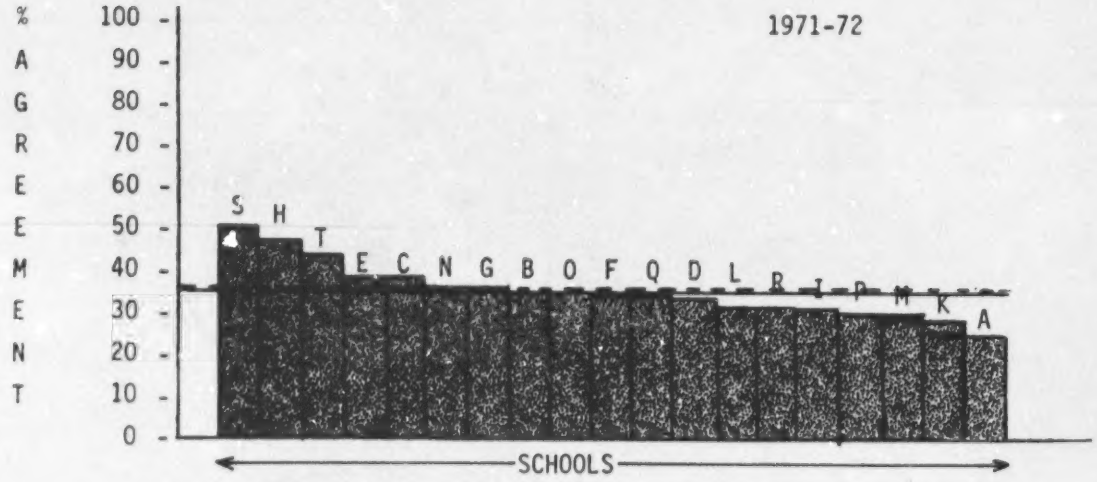
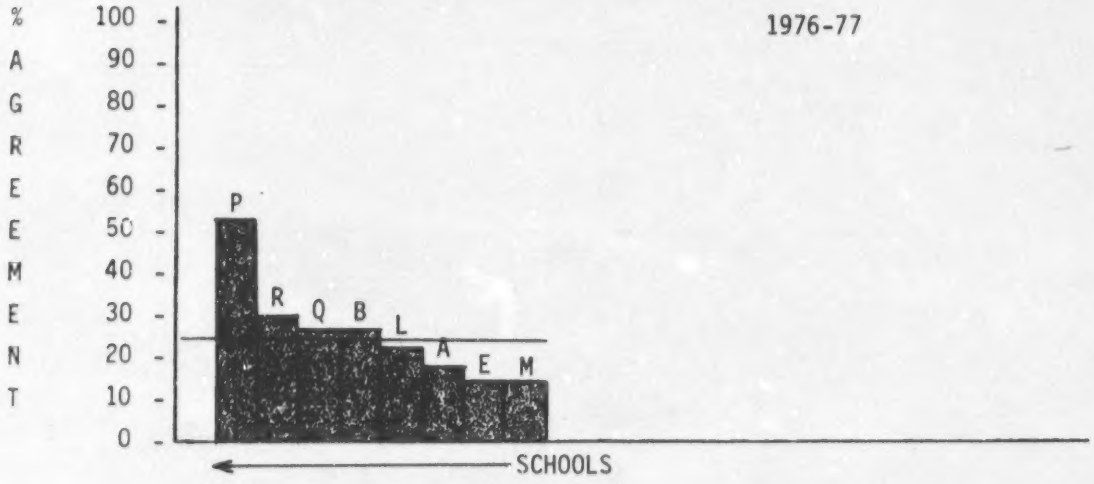


FIGURE 7

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES





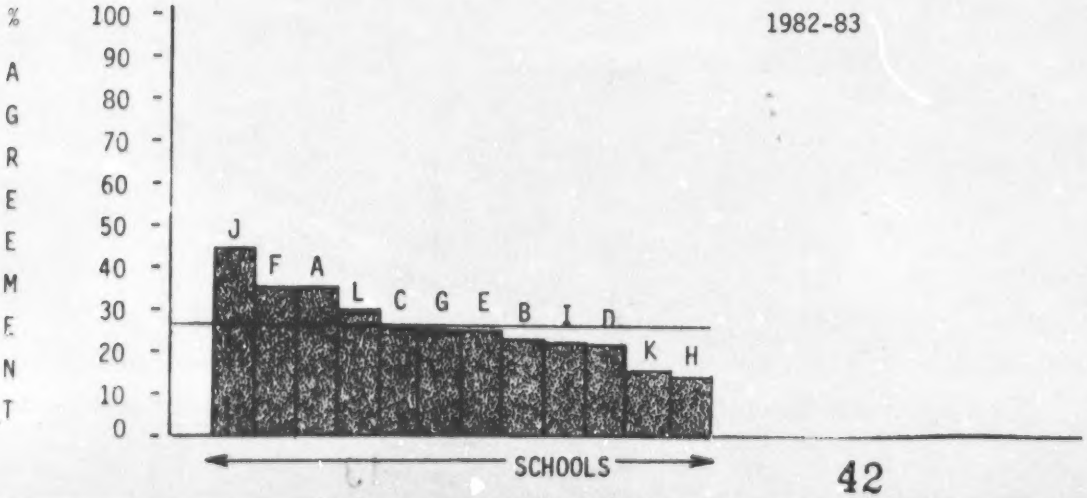
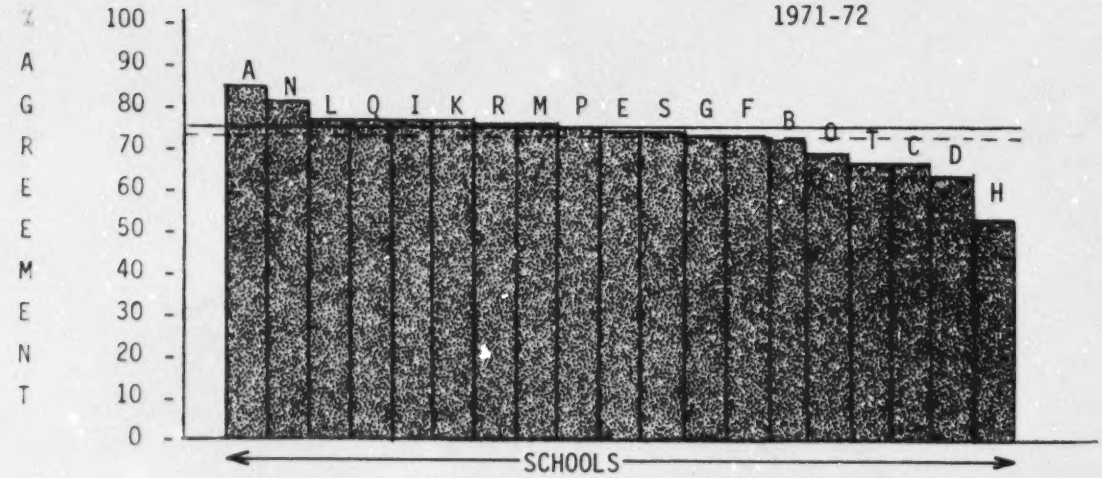
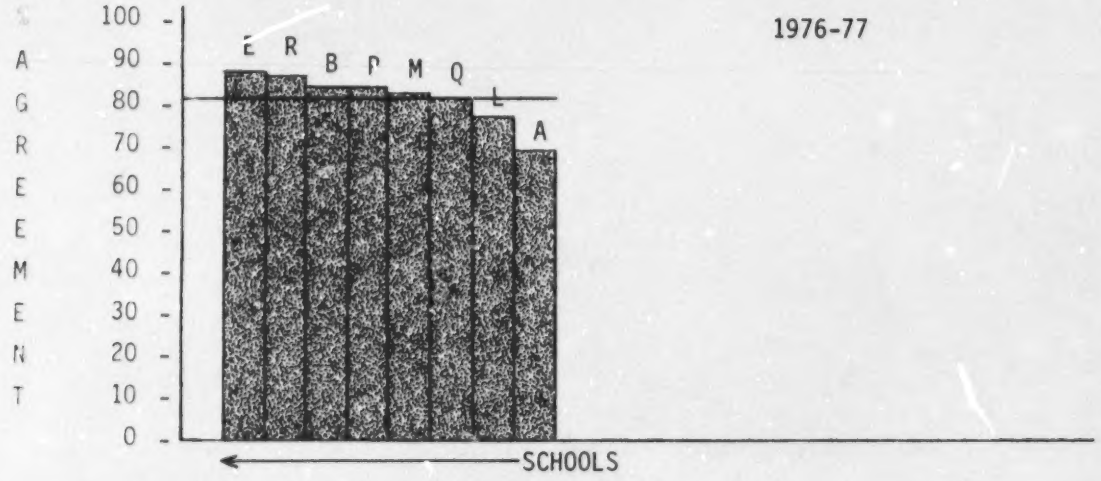


FIGURE 8

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT THEIR TEACHERS





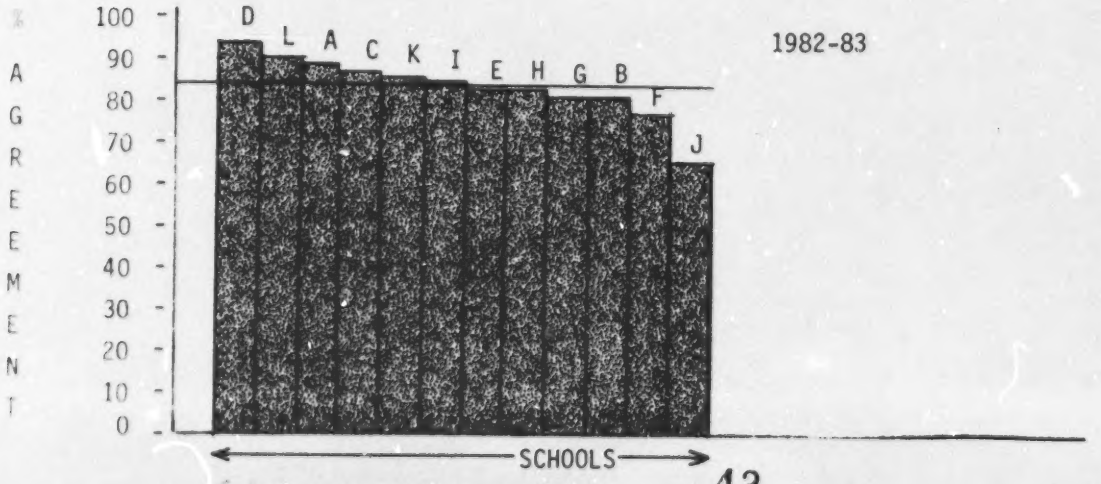
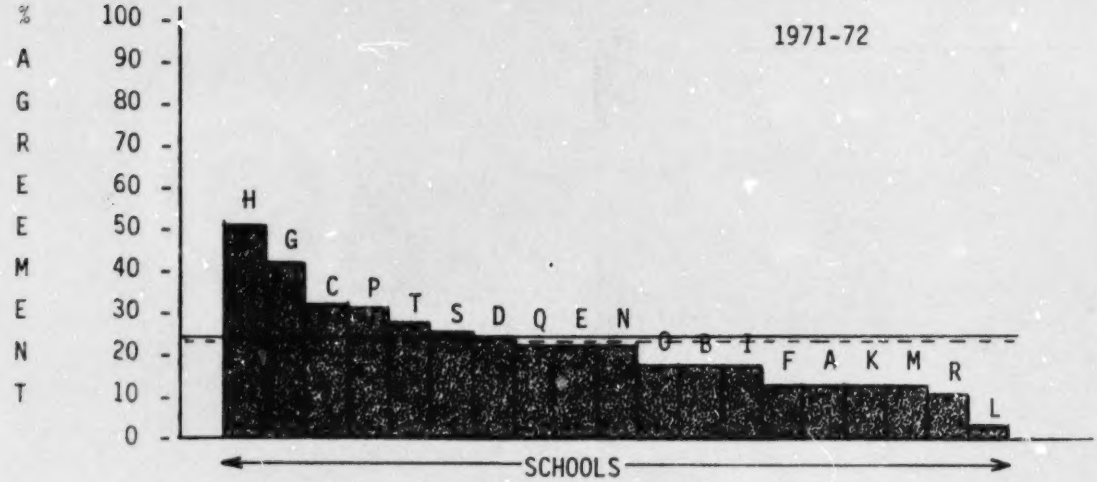
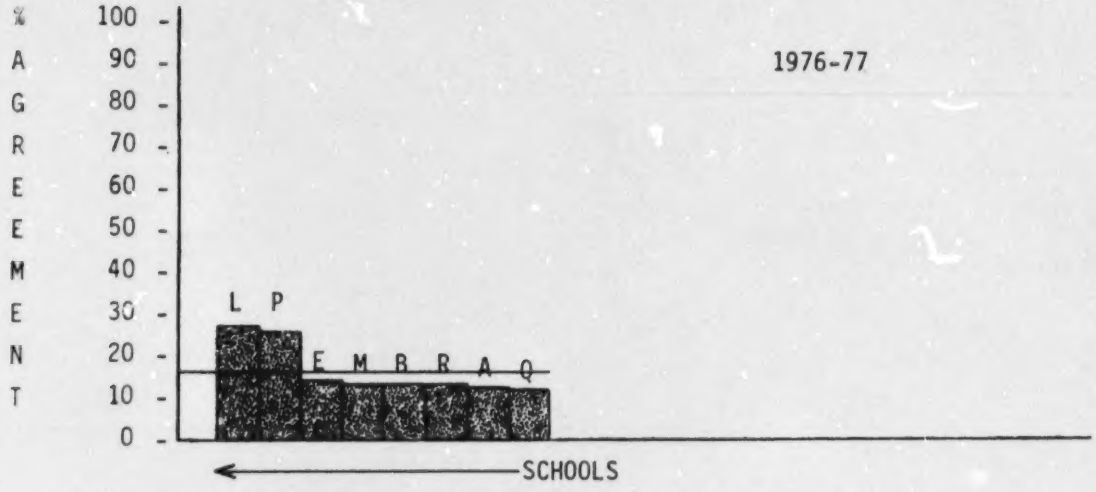


FIGURE 9

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT
LIKING OR DISLIKING THEIR SCHOOL





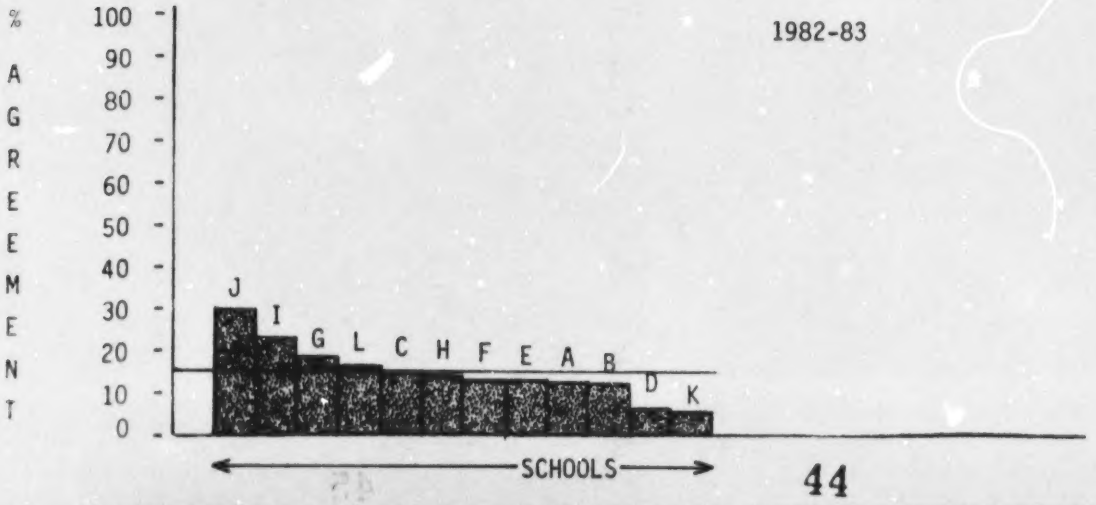


FIGURE 10

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR PARENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT FORMAL EXAMS

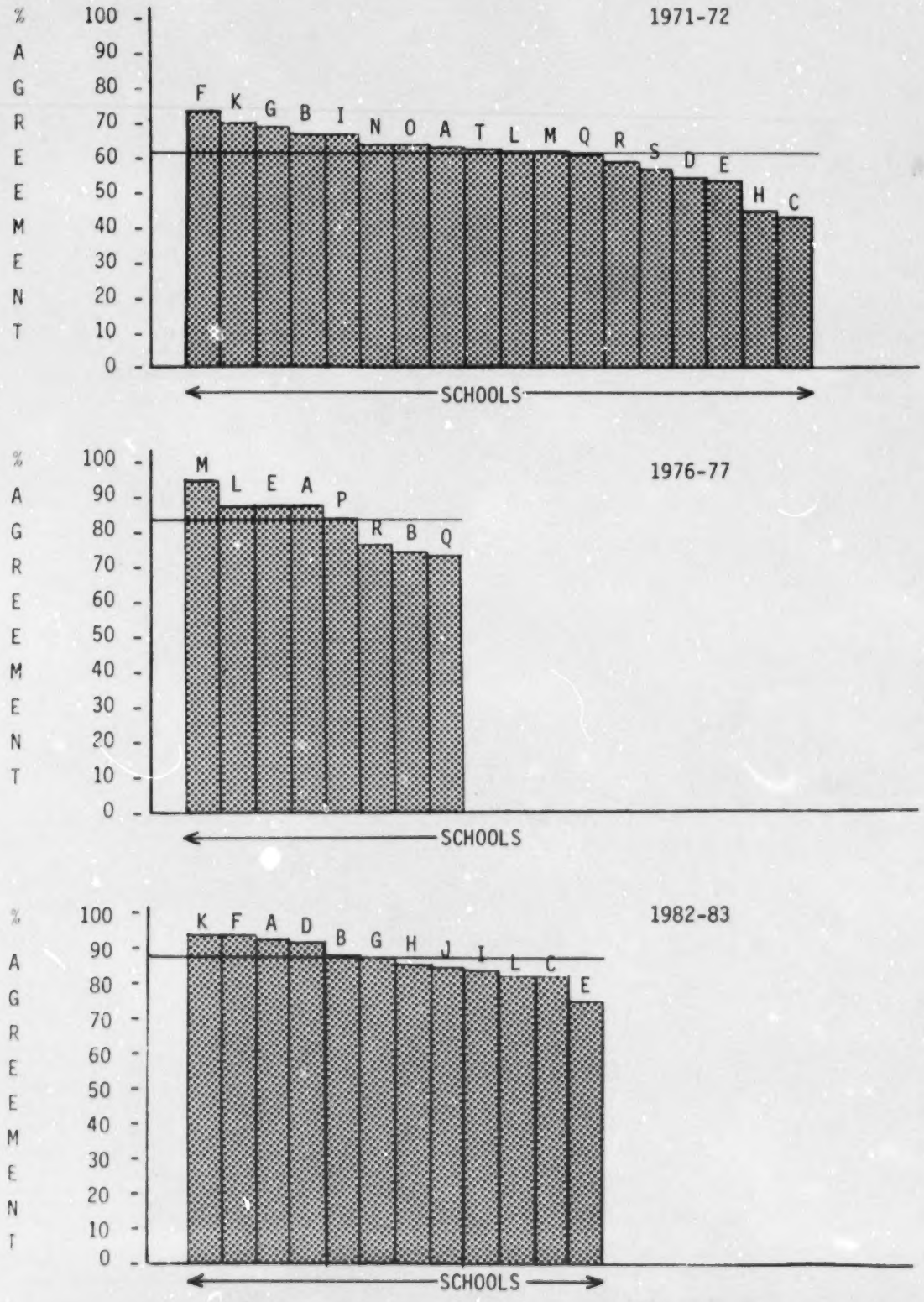
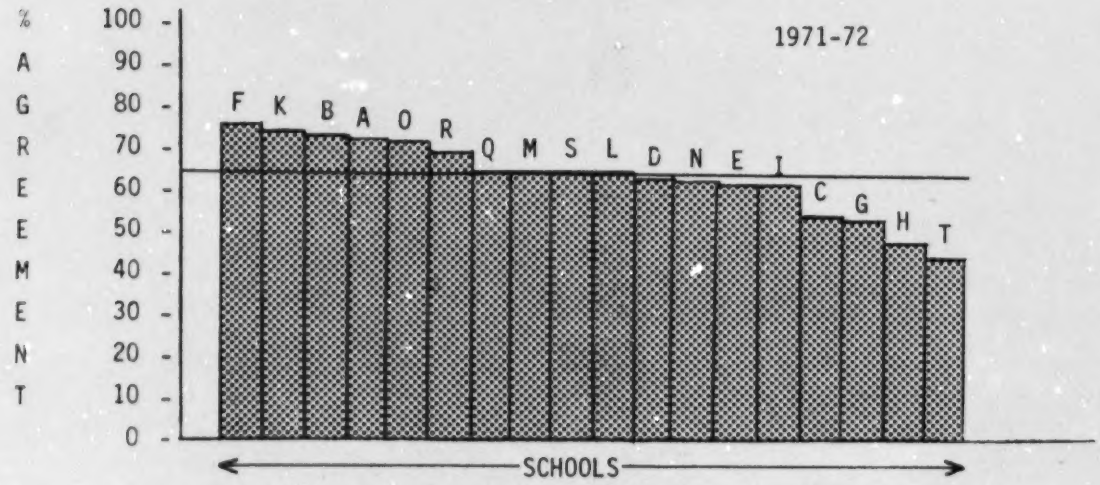
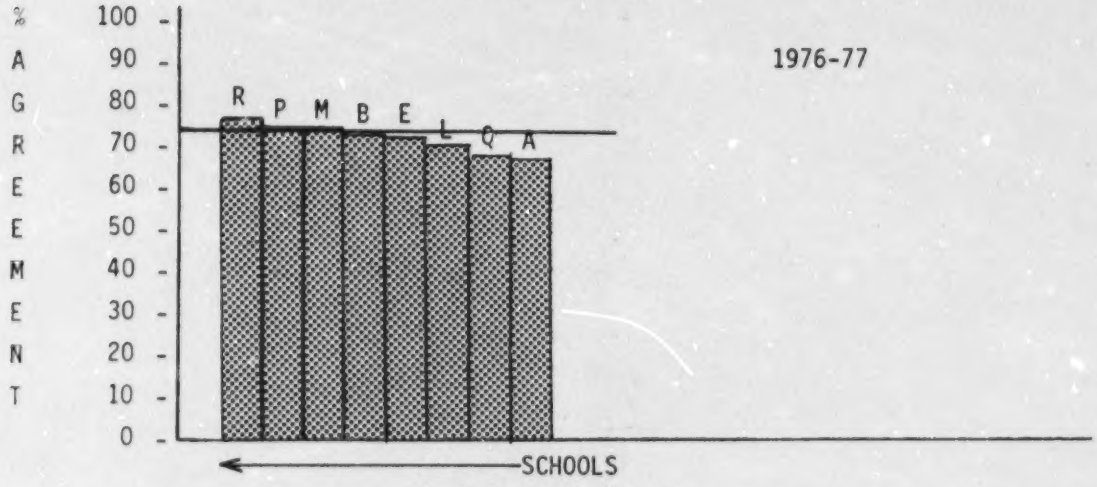


FIGURE 11

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR PARENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT DISCIPLINE





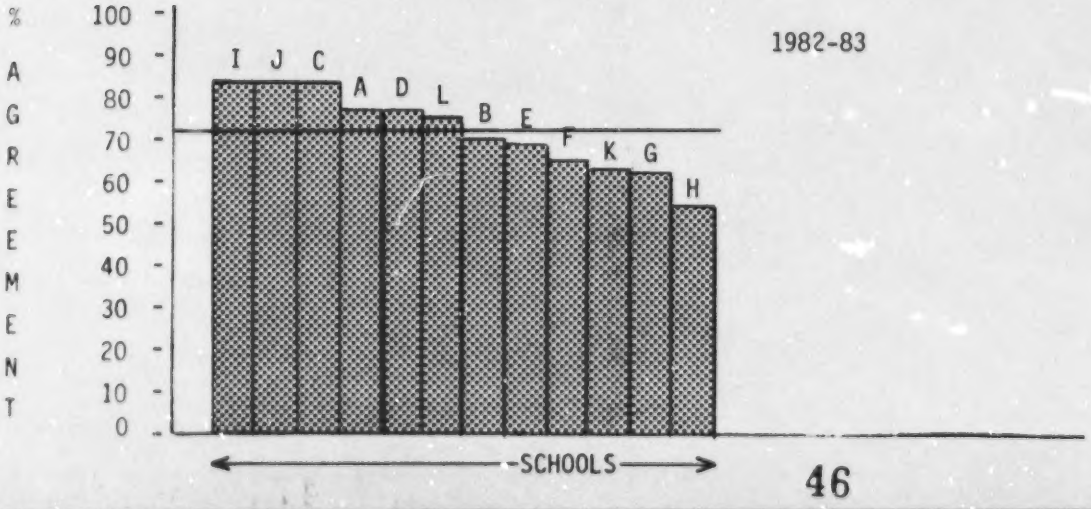
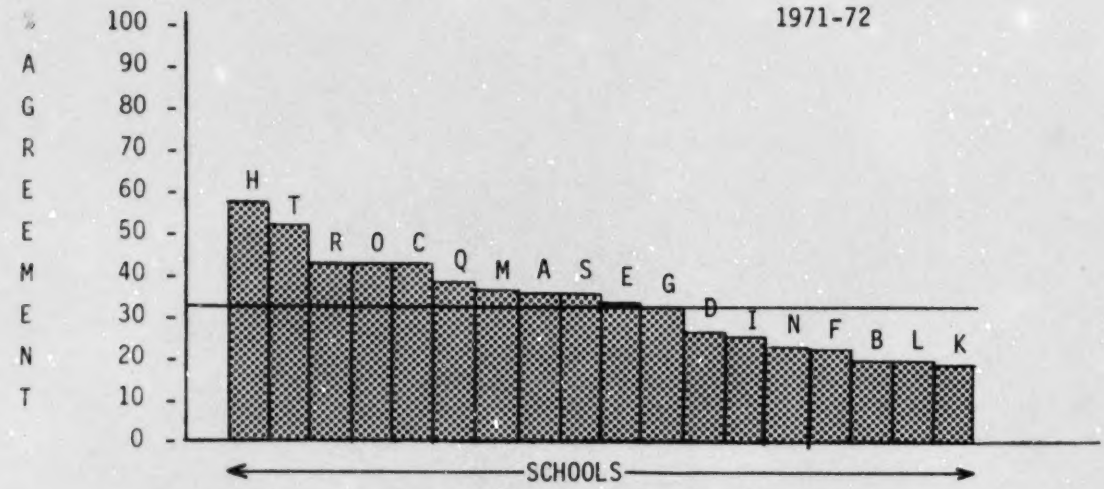
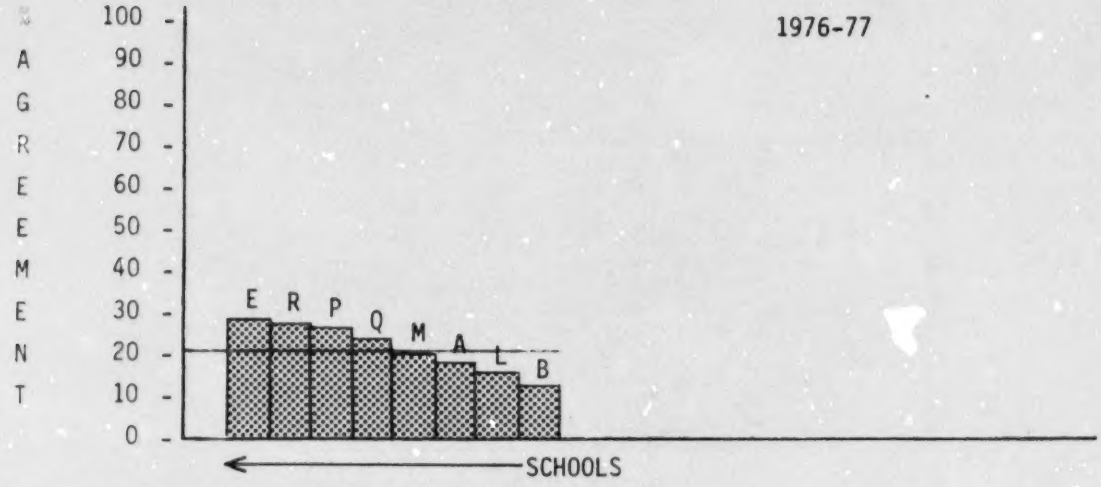


FIGURE 12

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR PARENTAL RESPONSES ABOUT MARKS





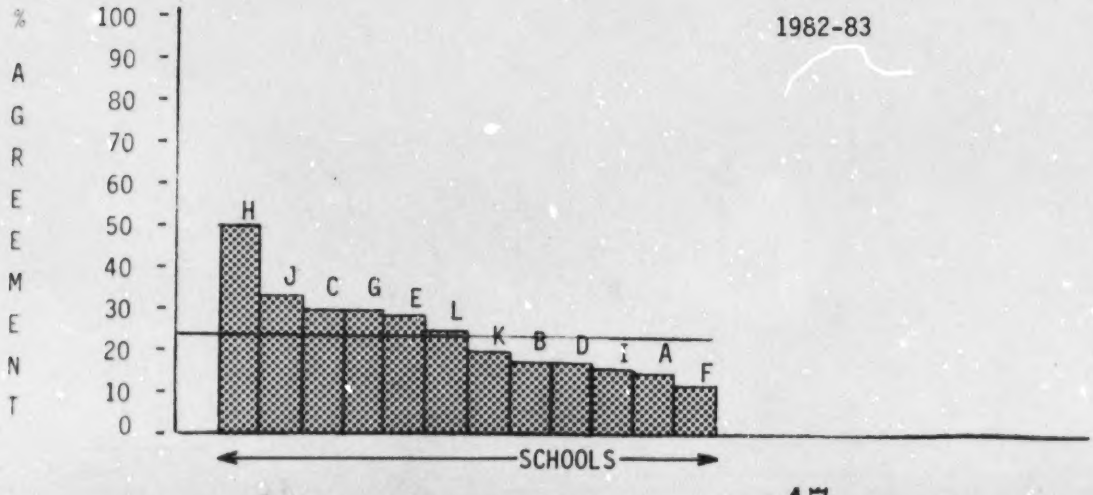
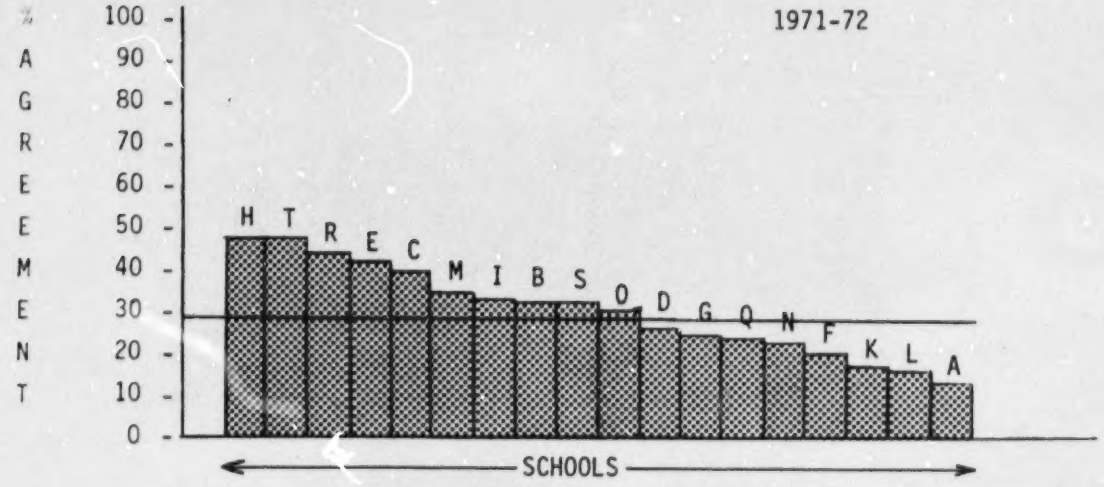
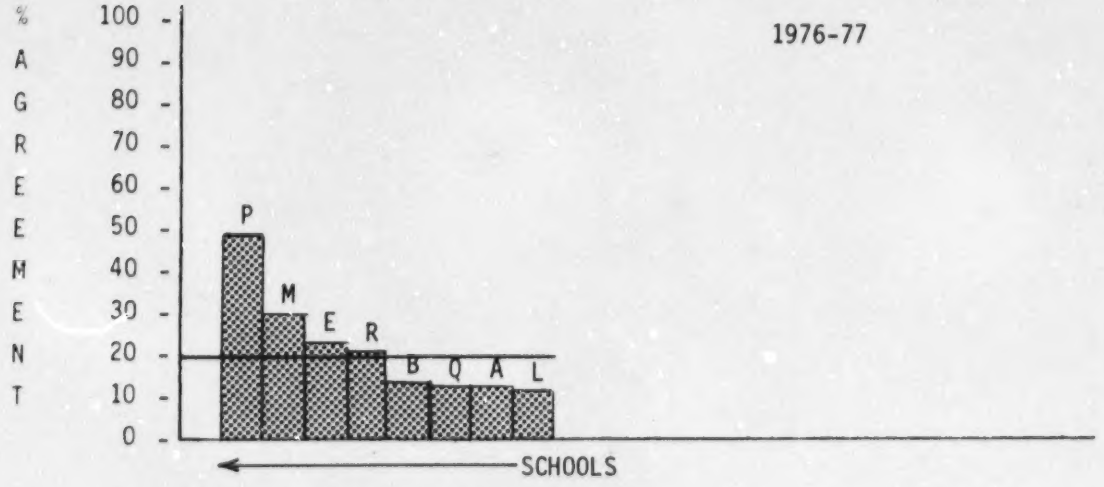


FIGURE 13

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR PARENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT STUDENTS DECIDING WHAT THEY WANT TO STUDY





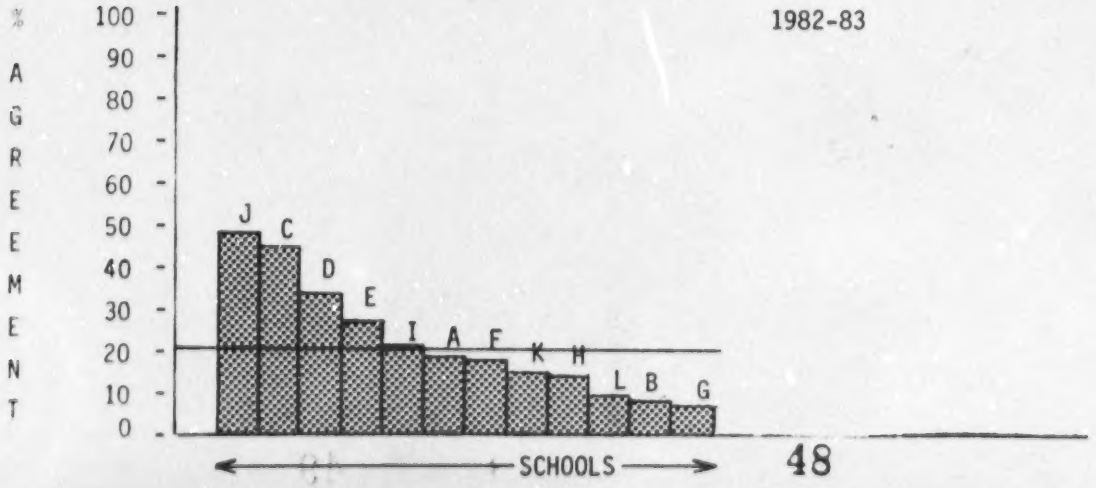
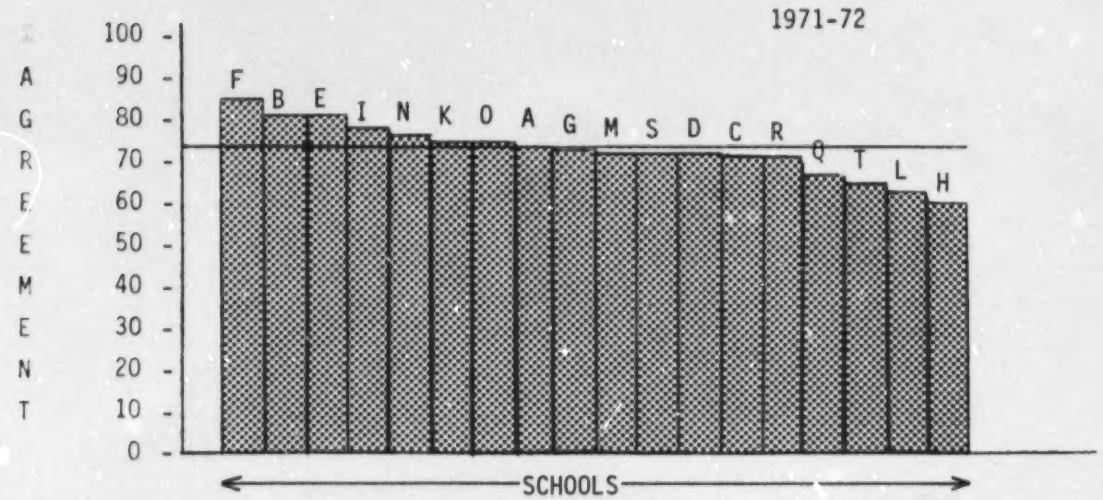
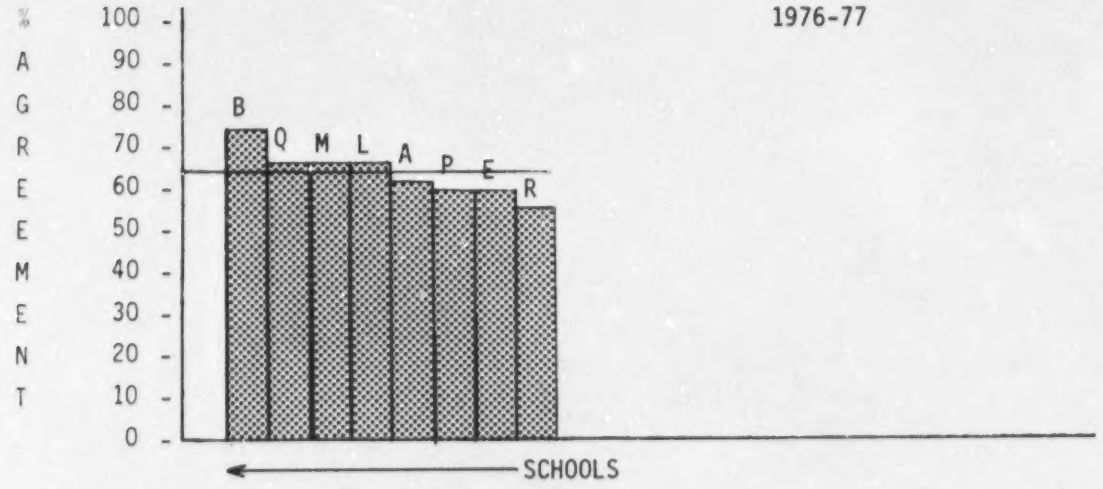


FIGURE 14

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR PARENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT GOOD EDUCATION





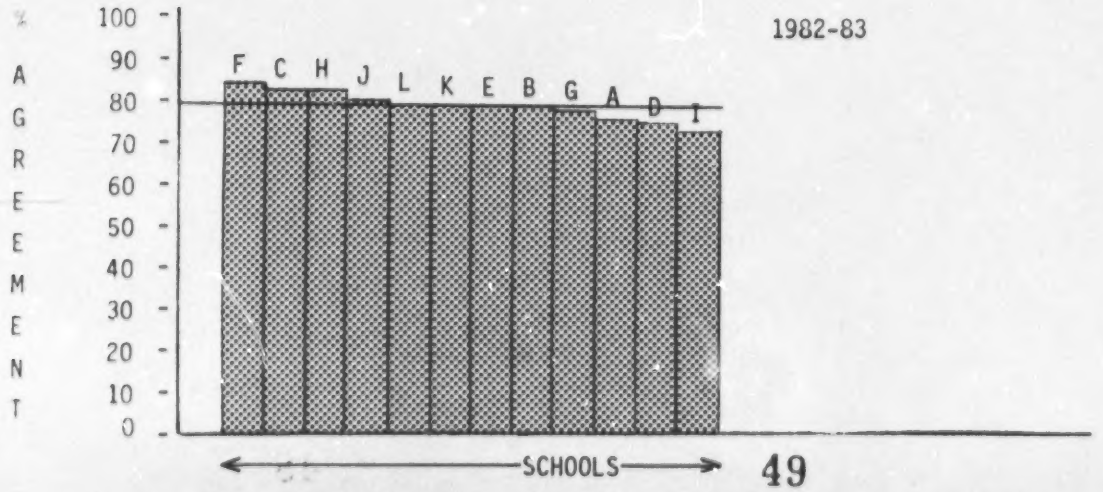
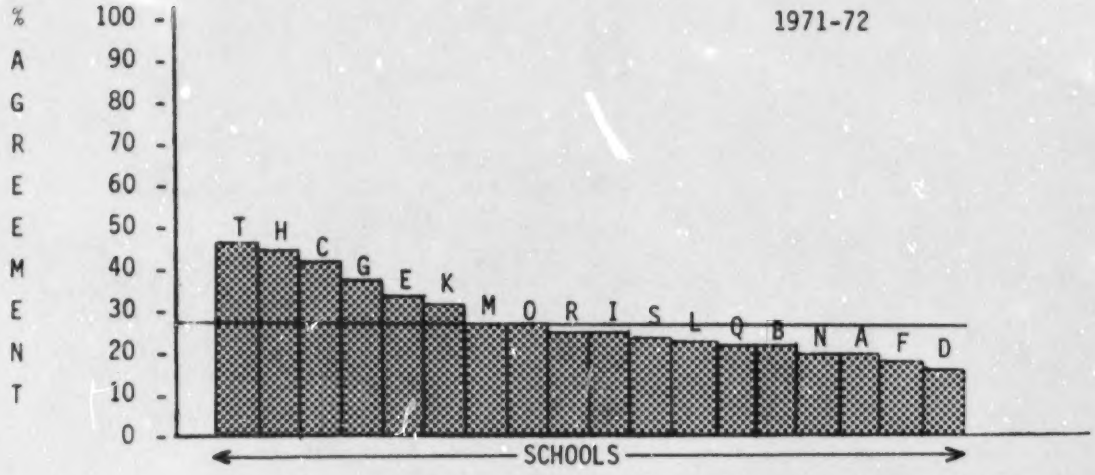
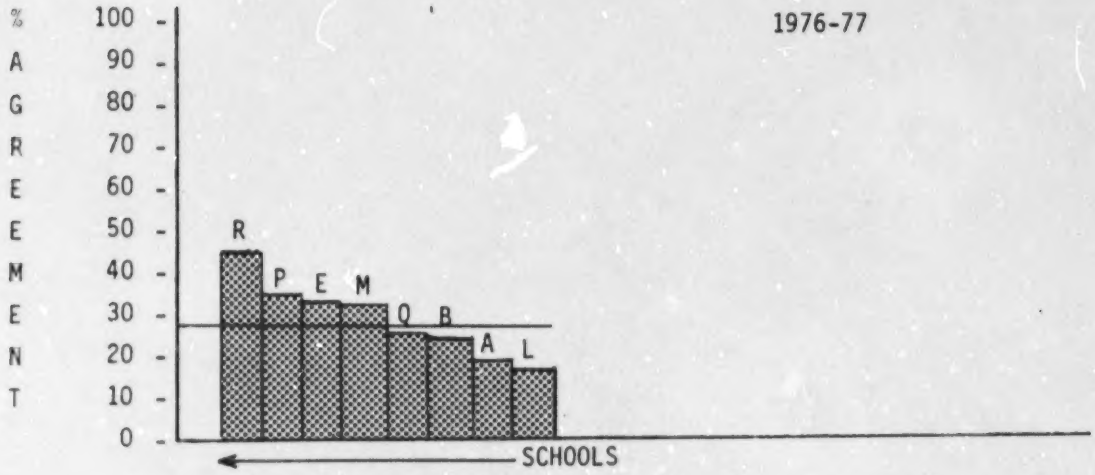


FIGURE 15

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR PARENTS' RESPONSES ABOUT RULES AND REGULATIONS





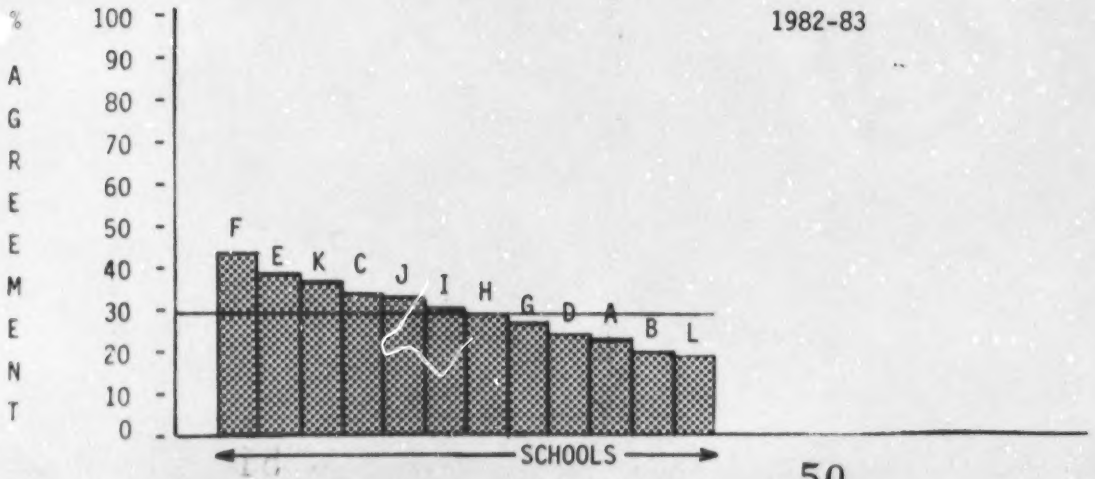


FIGURE 16

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT FORMAL EXAMS

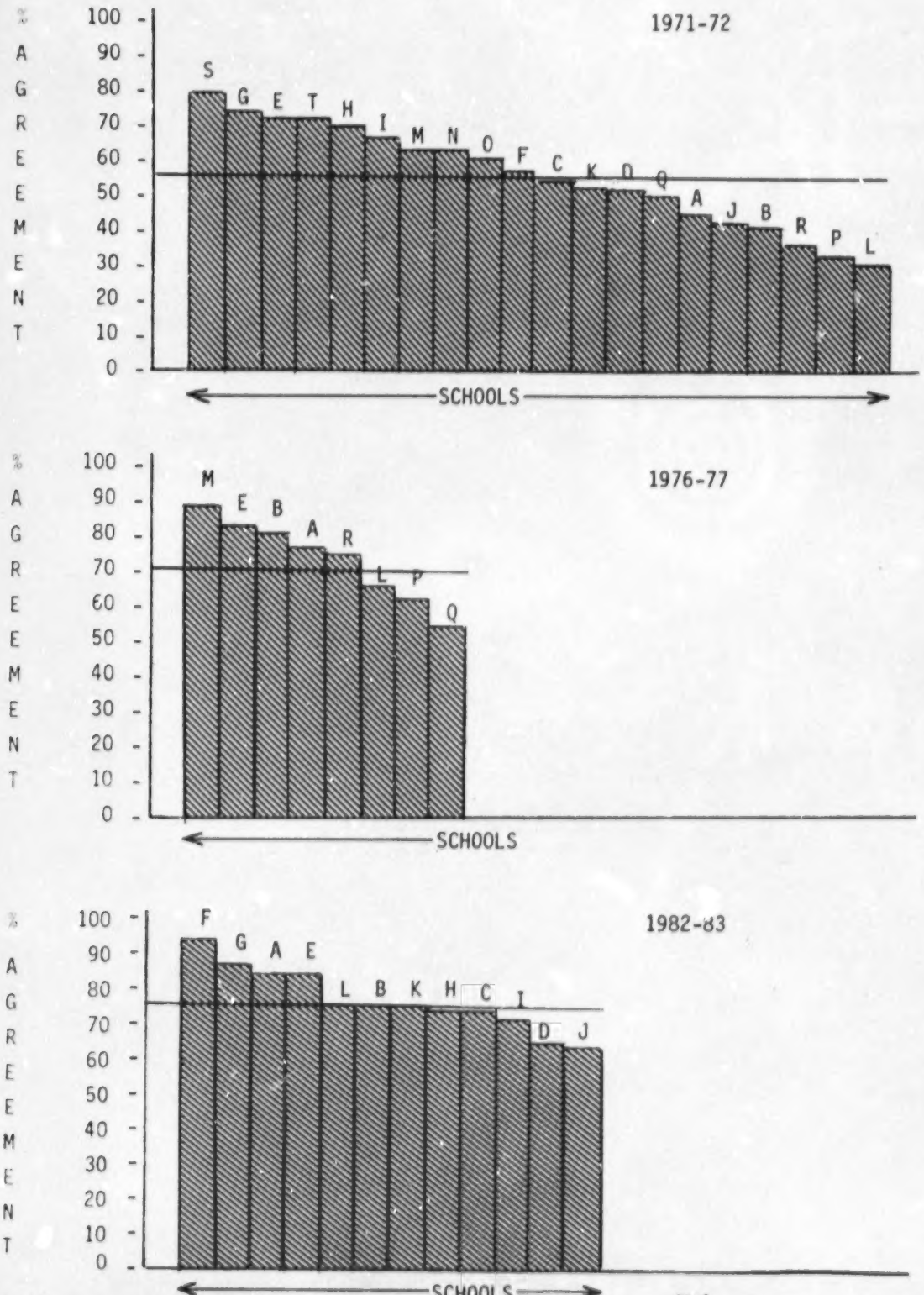
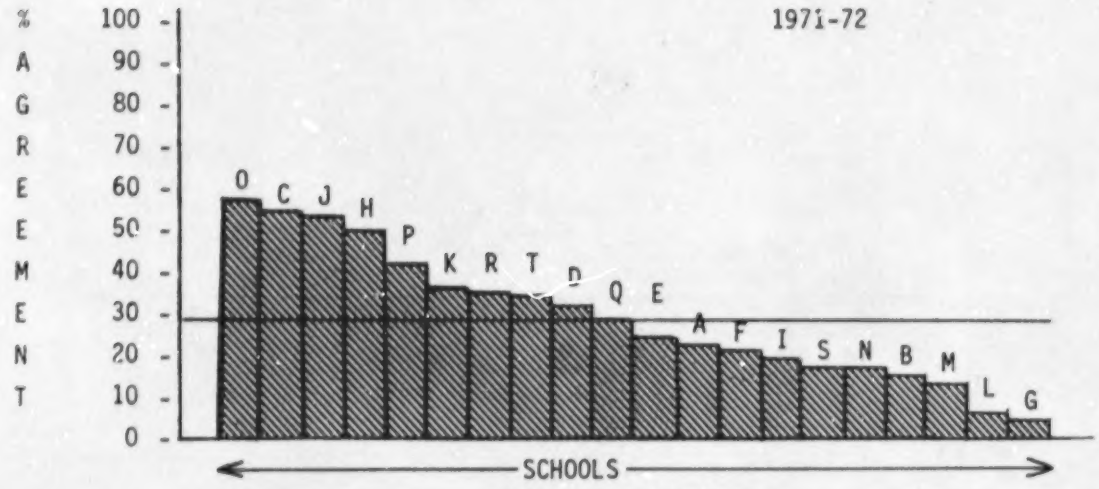
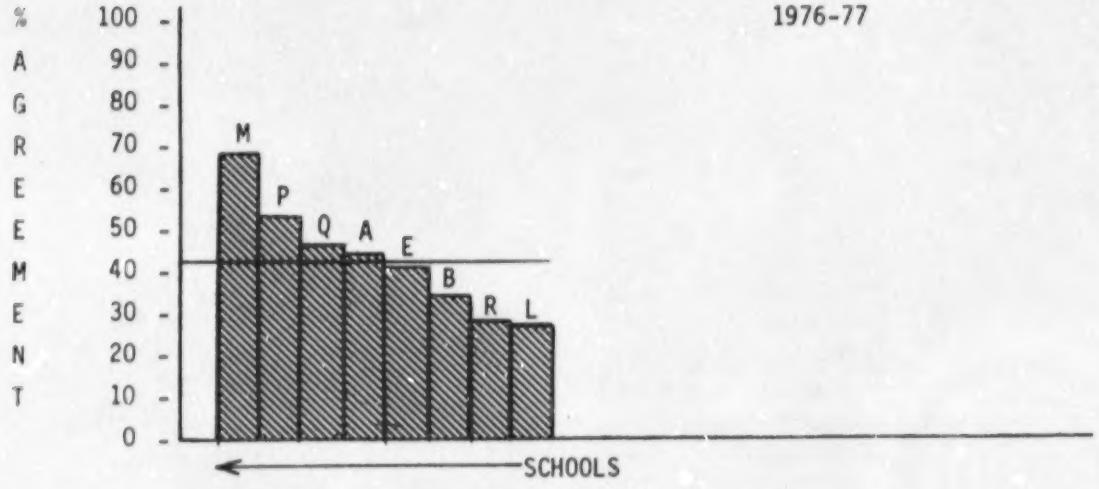


FIGURE 17

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT DISCIPLINE





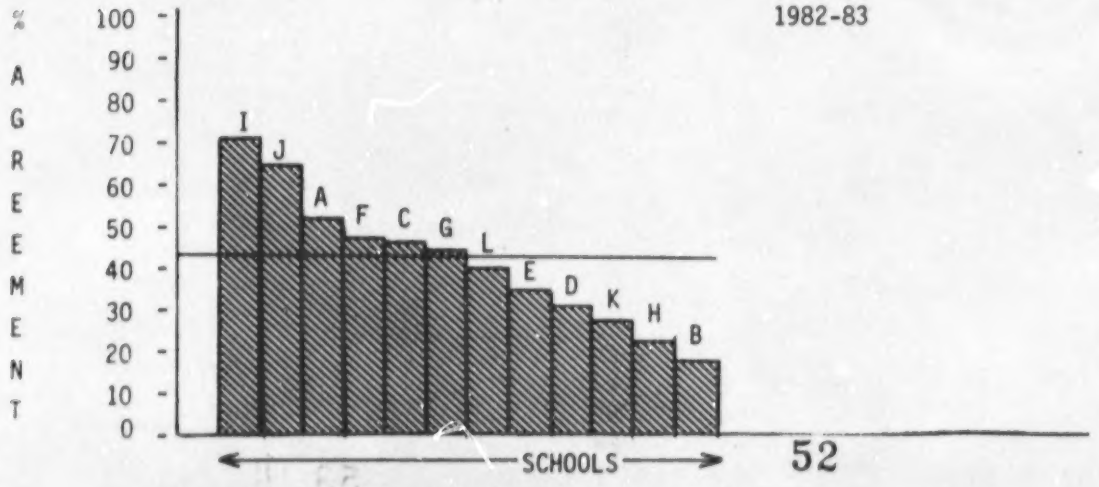
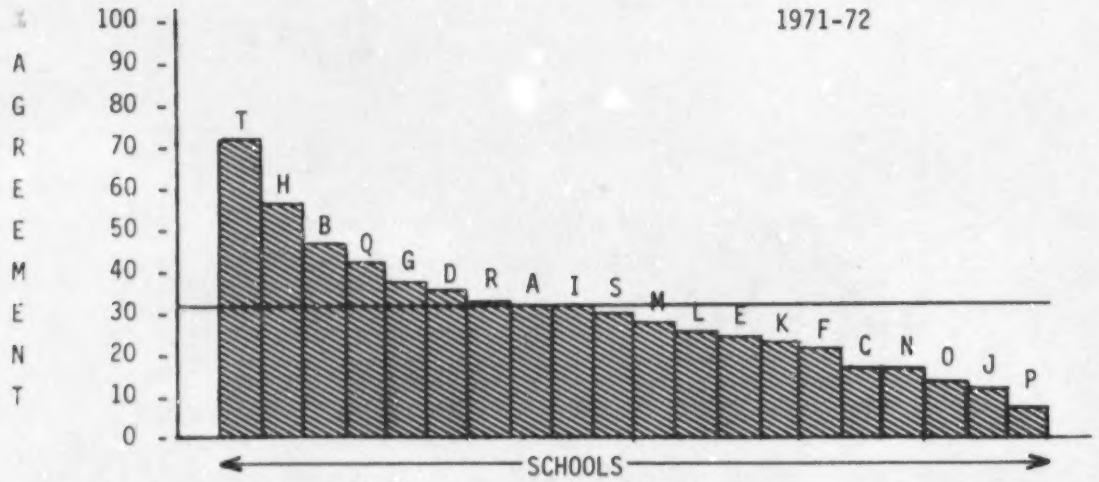
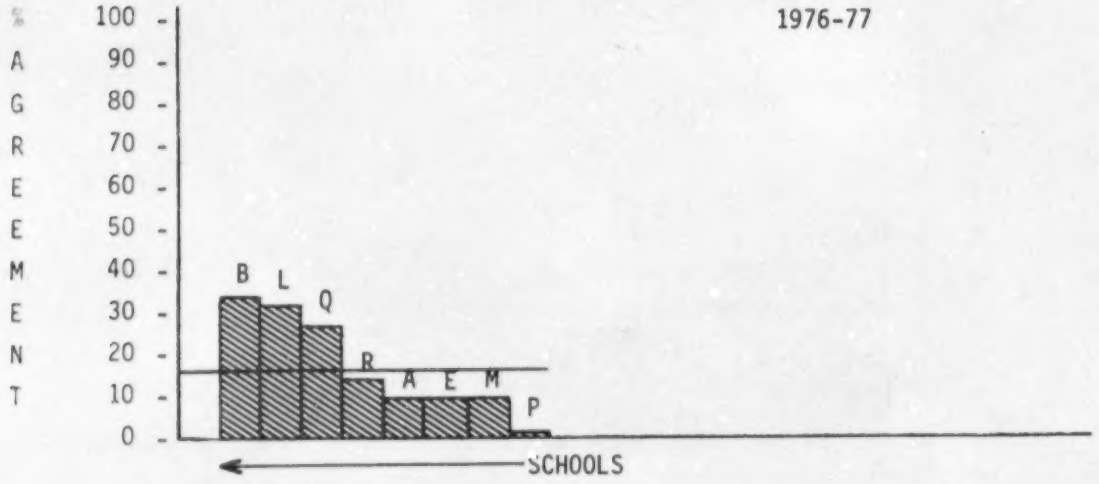


FIGURE 18

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT MARKS





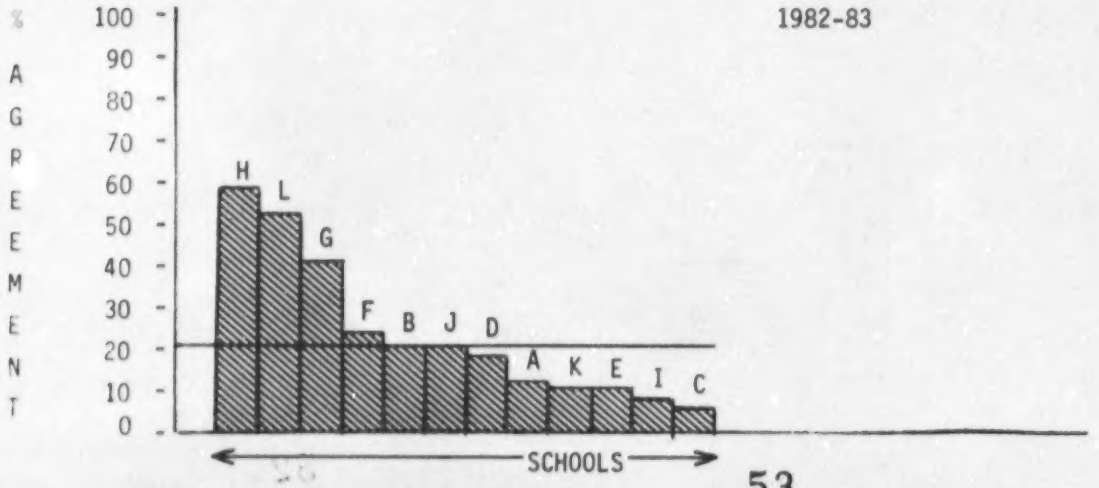
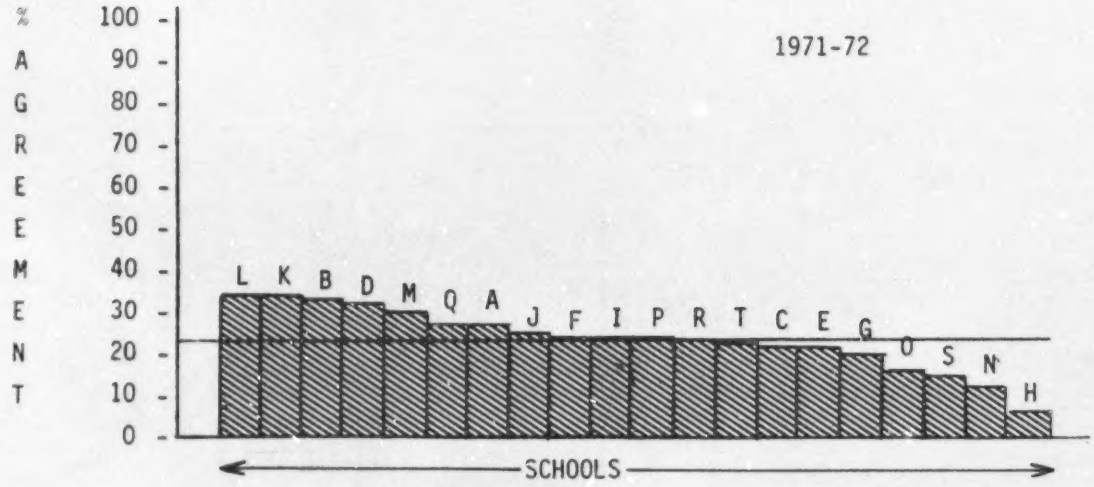
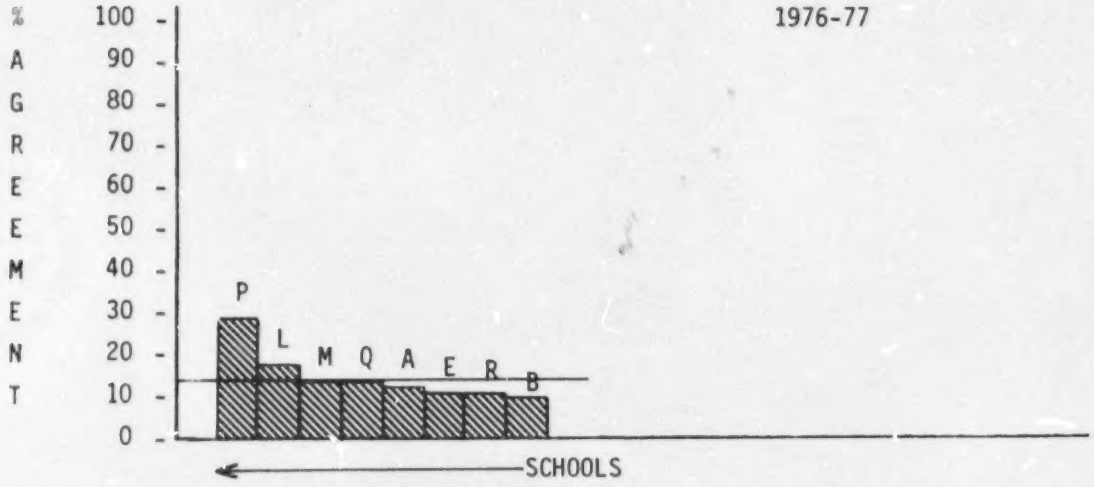


FIGURE 19

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT STUDENTS
DECIDING WHAT THEY WANT TO STUDY





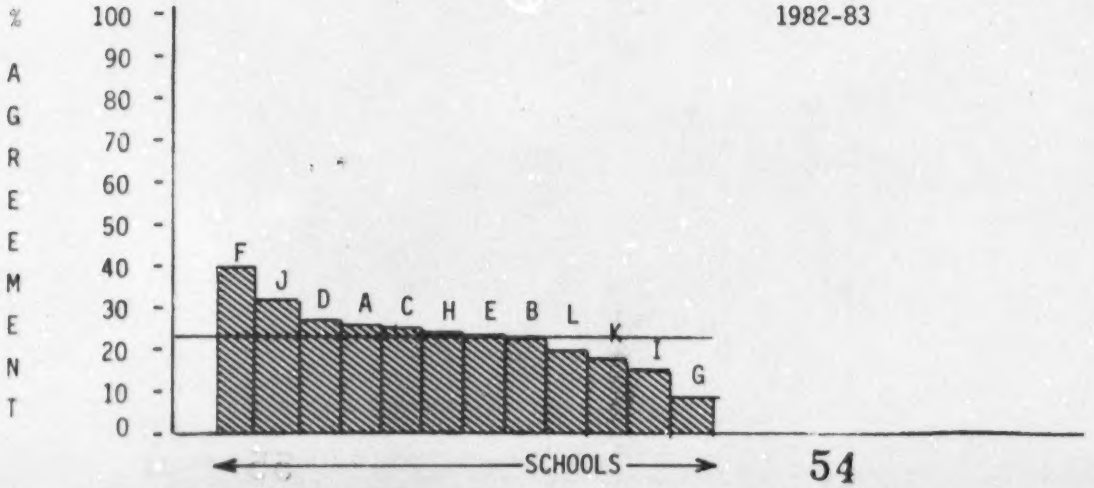
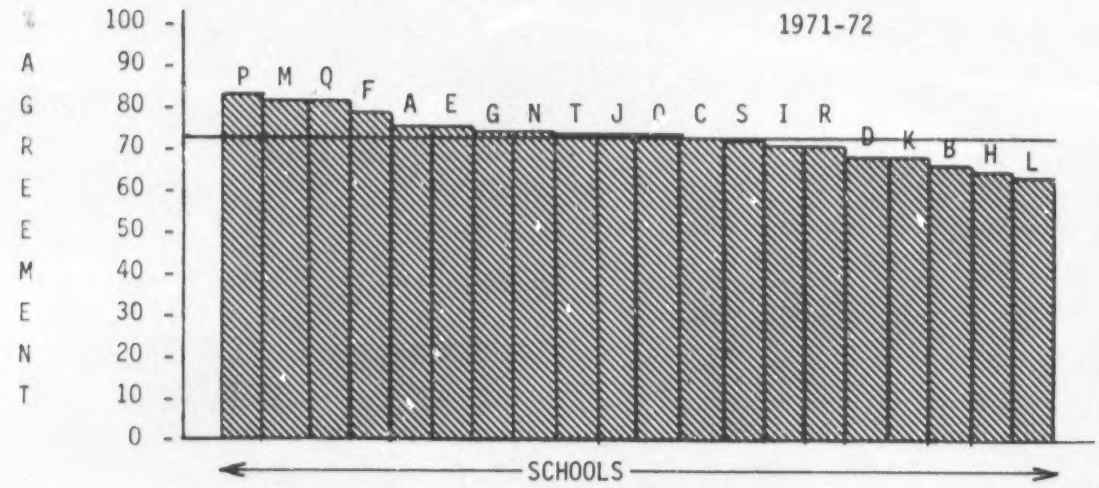
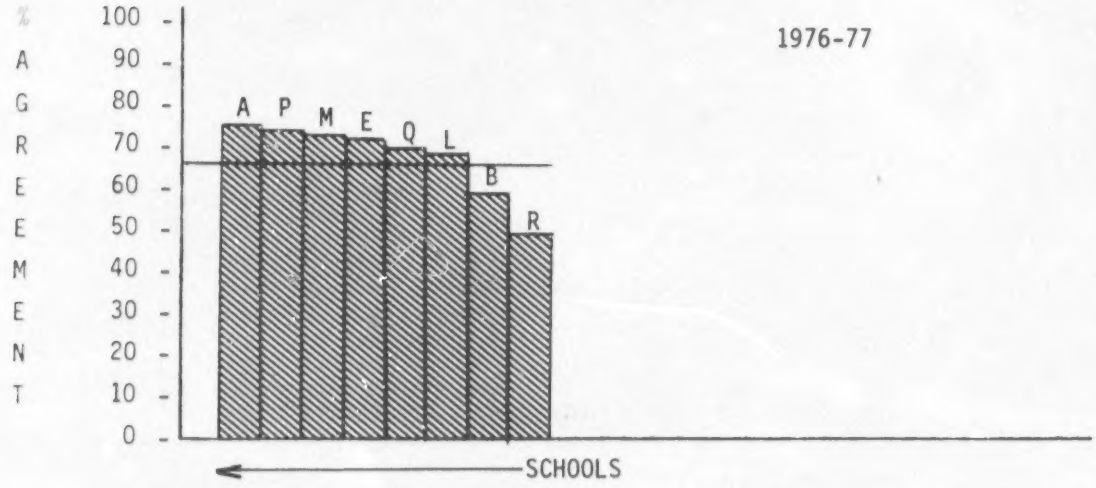


FIGURE 20

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES





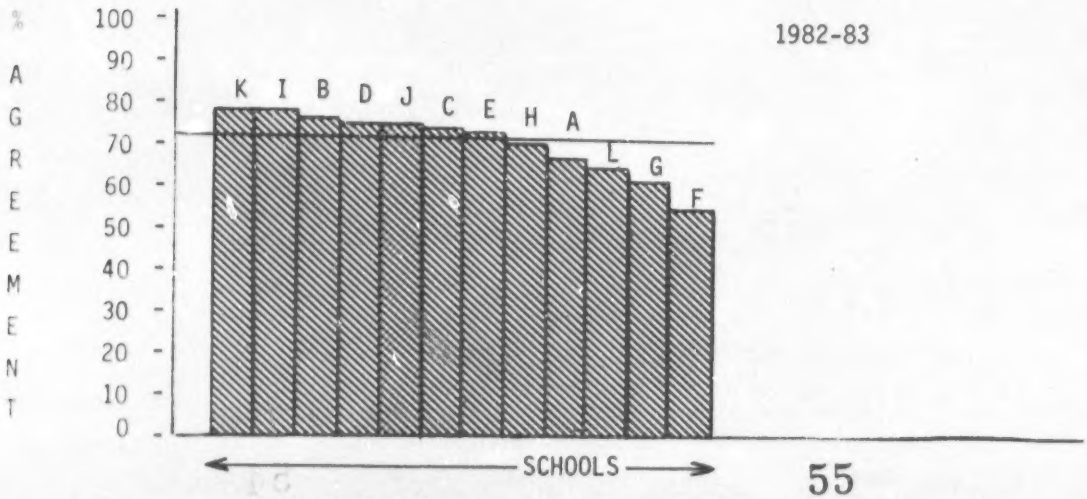
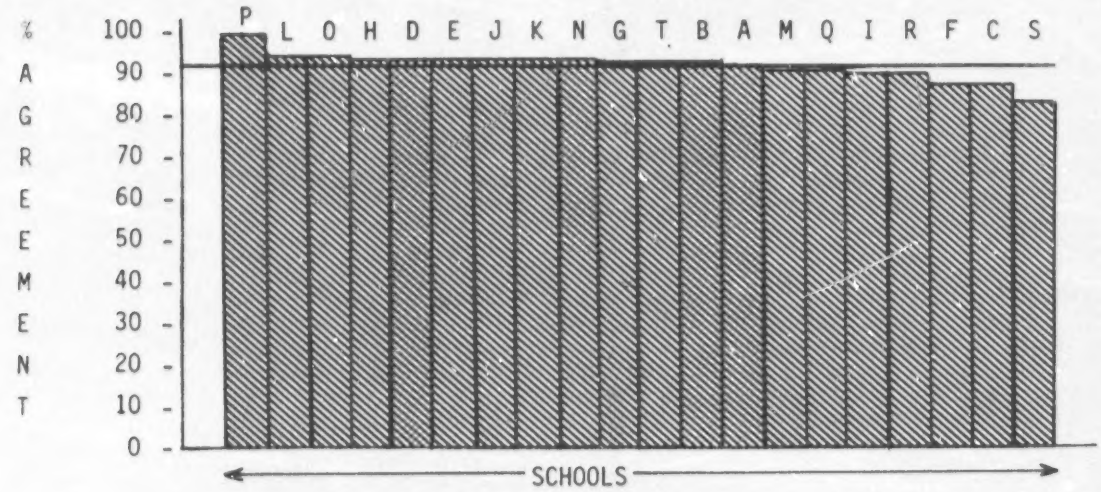


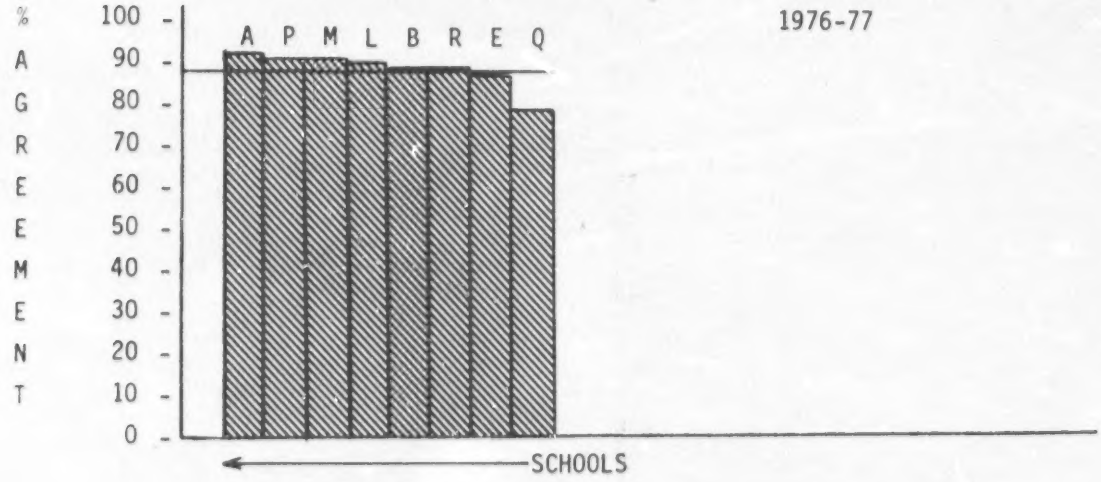
FIGURE 21

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT TEACHING

1971-72



1976-77



1982-83

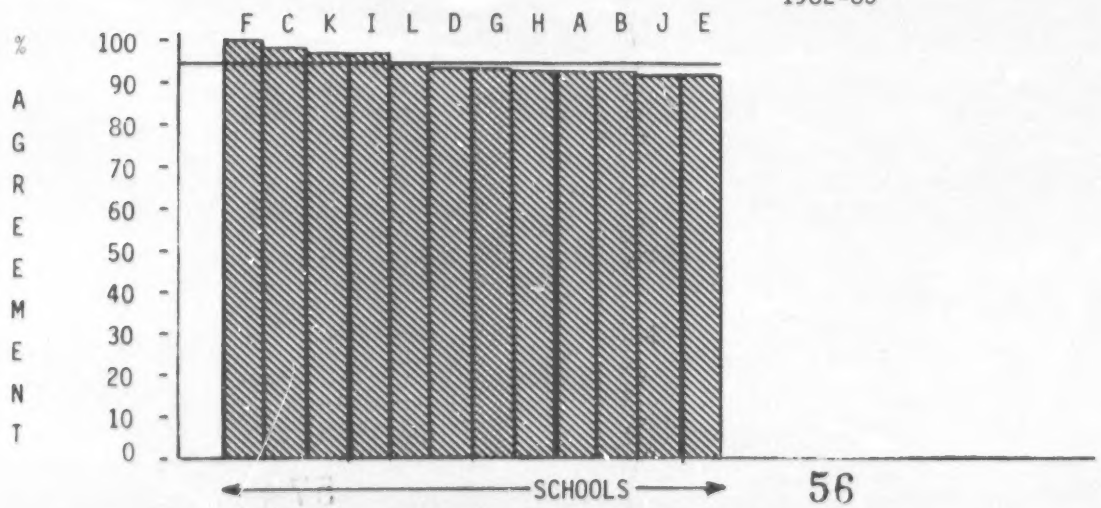
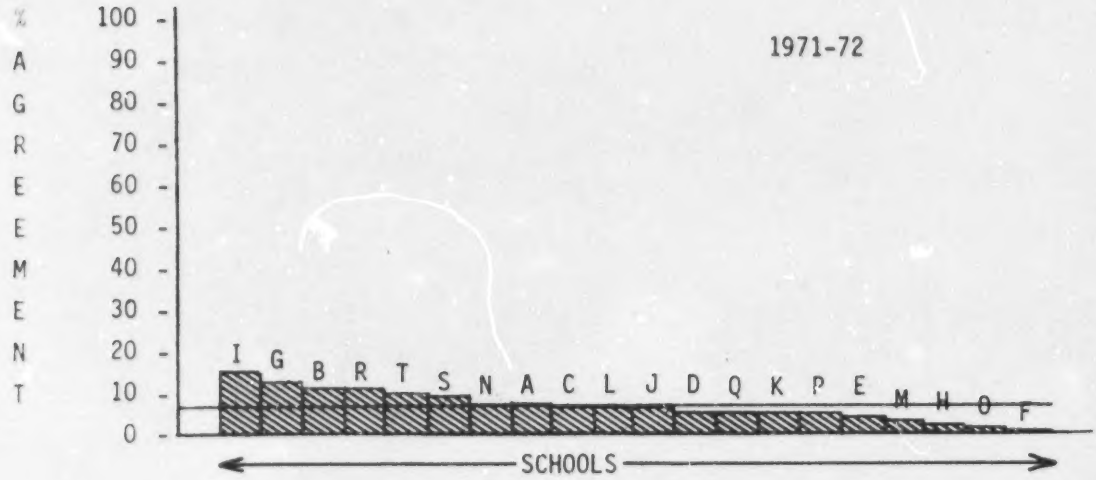
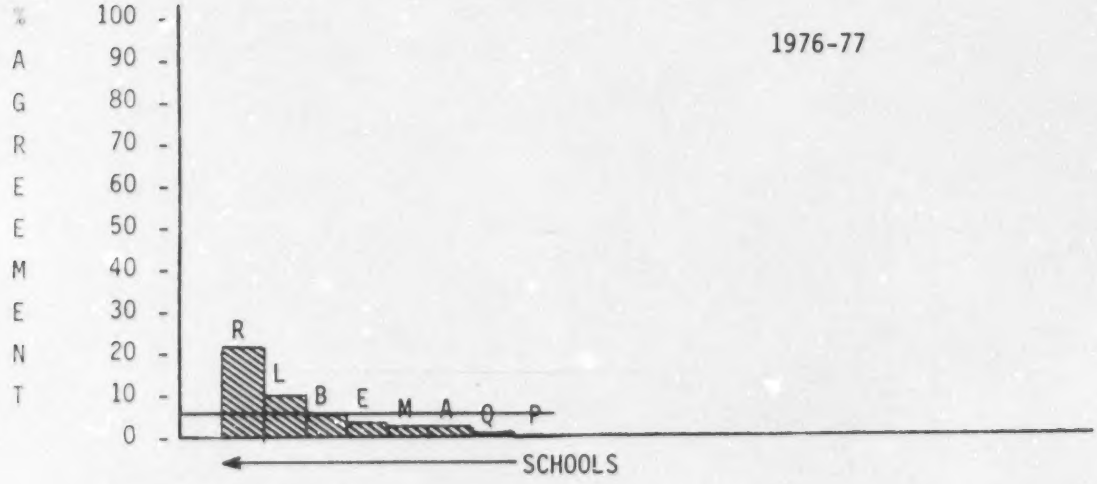


FIGURE 22

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT RULES AND REGULATIONS





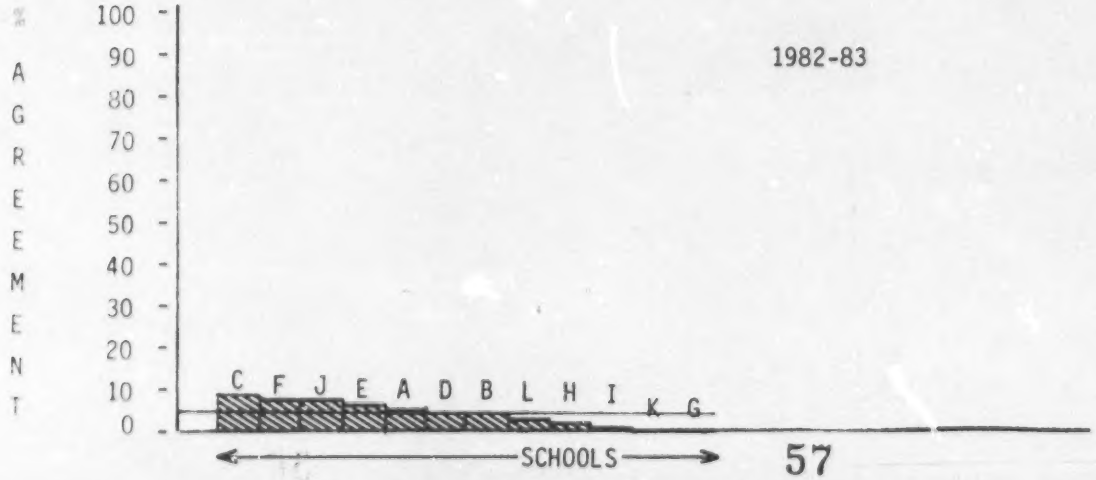
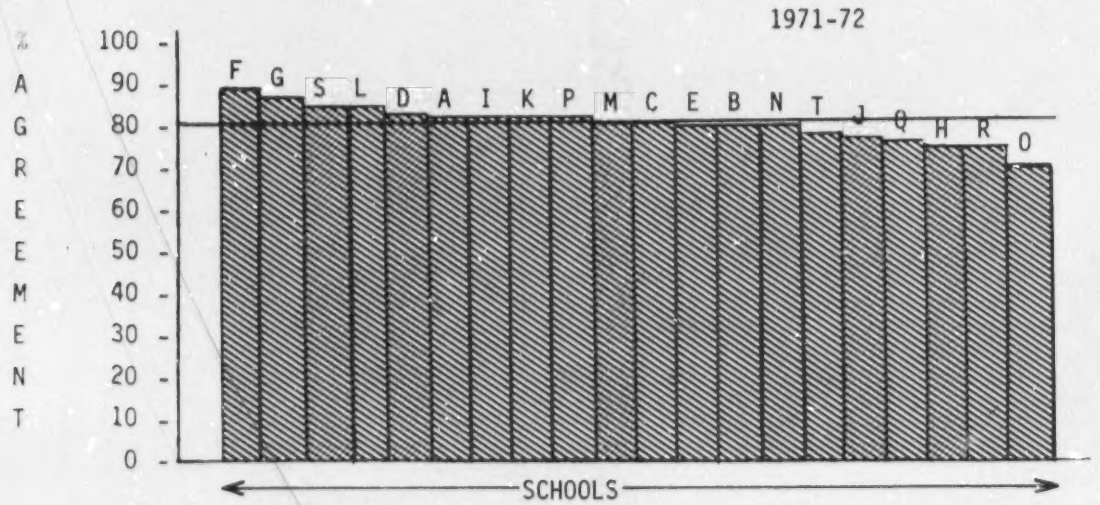
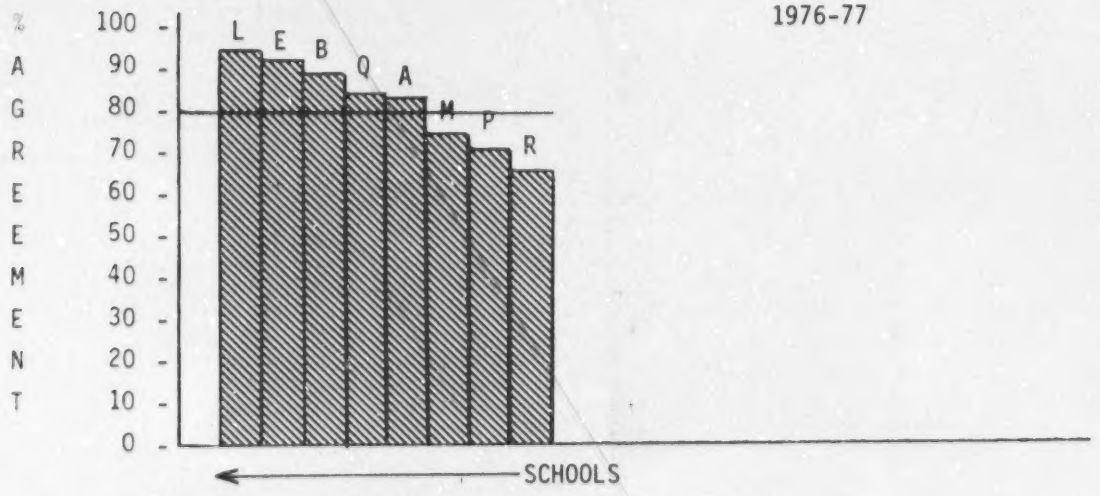


FIGURE 23

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF'S RESPONSES ABOUT GOOD EDUCATION





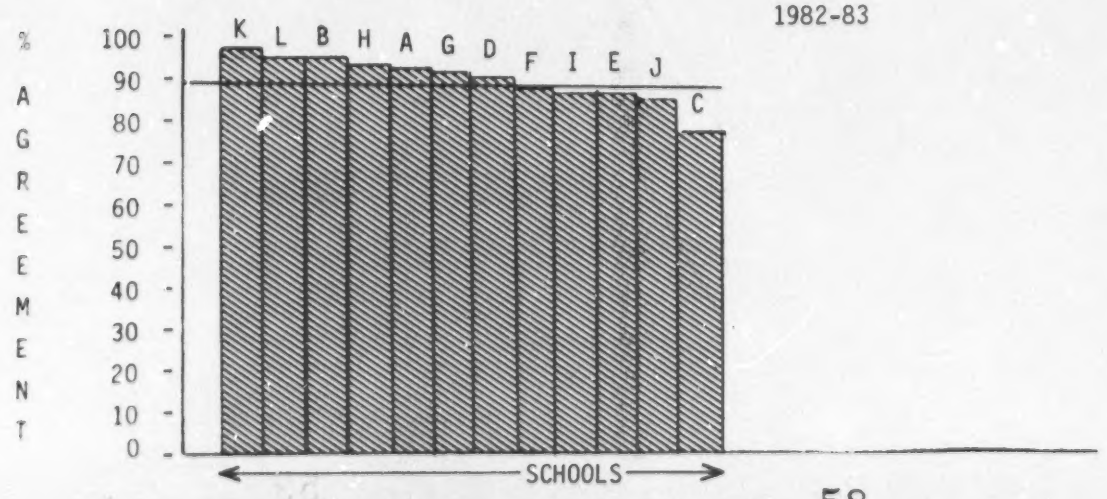
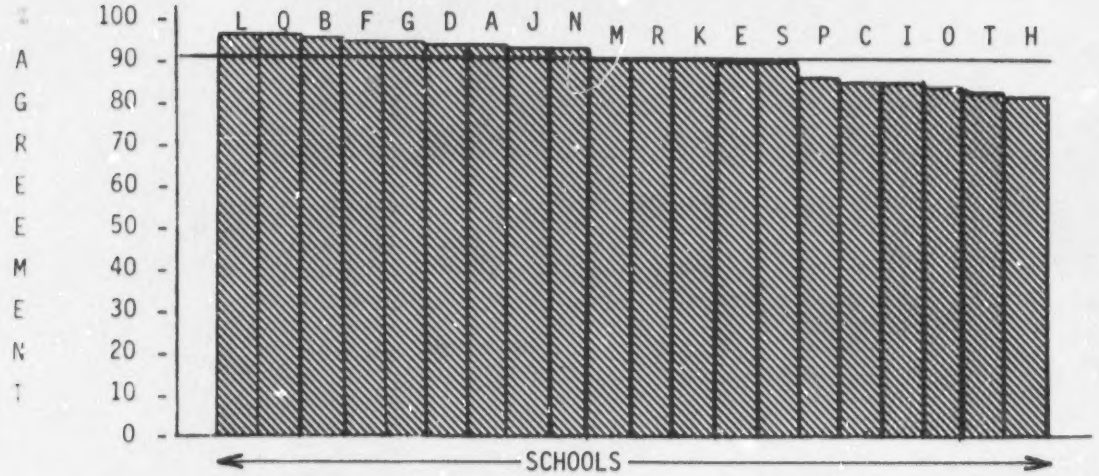


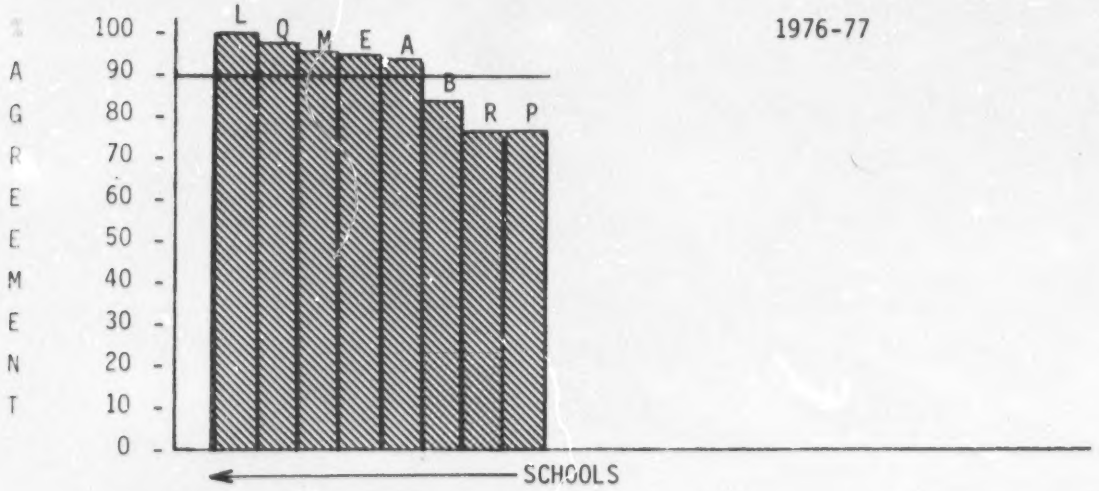
FIGURE 24

SCHOOL RESULTS FOR STAFF RESPONSES ABOUT
LIKING OR DISLIKING THEIR SCHOOL

1971-72



1976-77



1982-83